

TELEVISION MIND CONTROL FANTASY AS REALITY



THE JEWS OF PRIME TIME

EDMUND CONNELLY

INTRODUCTION

Given that Jews numerically prevail in some of our cultural institutions, and that in others they are represented in numbers and positions that automatically give them major influence, and given further that Jews have a Jewish sensibility, it follows that Jewish sensibility is likely to dominate some of our cultural institutions. It does.

Ernest van den Haag¹

It makes no sense at all to try to deny the reality of Jewish power and prominence in popular culture...Any Martian monitoring American television...would view *Seinfeld*, *Friends*, *The Nanny*, *Northern Exposure*, *Mad about You*, and other shows and be surprised to learn that fewer than 1 in 40 Americans is Jewish...

Michael Medved²

The way Steven Spielberg sees the world has become the way the world is communicated back to us every day.

Stephen Schiff³

AMID THE TURBULENCE OF THE SIXTIES

In the wake of the turbulent sixties, one could do worse than identify a change in the prime-time television lineup to mark the beginning of the end of the dominance of people of European heritage in the United States. For in the early 1970s, the “hayseed” shows about the heartland and the American Majority vanished from the three major networks’ evening offerings and were replaced by decidedly more ethnic fare. In a few short years, essentially all-white shows like *The Beverly Hillbillies*, *The Andy Griffith Show*/*Mayberry R.F.D.*, *Green Acres*, and *Petticoat Junction* gave way to “hip, urban” shows that “pushed the socially engaged agenda into the ethno-racial arena.” In place of Andy Griffith and Don Knotts, viewers were now watching characters from “ethnicoms” in shows like *Sanford and Son*, *The Jeffersons*, and *Chico and the Man*.⁴ Alongside these shows came socially conscious sitcoms often critical

of mainstream values, led by Norman Lear's *All in the Family*. What did all this mean for representation of life in modern America, and where has it led in the ensuing thirty-five years?

Perhaps Wilmot Robertson was right when he wrote about the dispossession of majority white Christians in modern America. The present essay focuses on one aspect of that dispossession: the role of prime-time television, which in the years 1960–2000 was possibly the most powerful medium in existence for delivering scripted cultural messages to the American masses.

To understand the changes that have been made on the small screen, it is necessary to focus on who the people are that have been in a position to make those changes and who have, in fact, been making them. We find that the primary producers of this form of anti-majority cultural representation are essentially the same group as that producing media images more generally. That the members of this group are not themselves drawn from the majority has had a critical impact on the final products Americans see on TV.

Readers may suspect that the group in question is composed largely of immigrant Eastern European Jews and their descendants, an argument that has been made by TOQ contributor Kevin MacDonald. In the paperback preface to *The Culture of Critique*, MacDonald describes the Hollywood aspects of a wider culture struggle between Jews and Gentiles. The kings of Hollywood branched out easily from their first visual mass medium into the electronic media of radio, and then, as technology advanced, into television. The same themes and conflicts evident in a hundred years of Hollywood film can therefore be found in TV offerings as well. For a few crucial reasons, though, television was late in explicitly addressing them.

We are fortunate to have not only extensive studies of "the Jewish invention of Hollywood"⁵ but insightful scholarship into the role of Jews in the creation of television fare as well. For instance, we have Jonathan and Judith Pearl's *The Chosen Image: Television's Portrayal of Jewish Themes and Characters* (1999); Vincent Brook's *Something Ain't Kosher Here: The Rise of the "Jewish" Sitcom* (2003); David Zurawik's *The Jews of Prime Time* (2003); and Paul Buhle's *From the Lower East Side to Hollywood: Jews in American Popular Culture* (2004). These books delineate and discuss the scores of Jewish programs and characters featured on American TV in the last three decades, with names familiar to even the most casual TV viewer: *Mad About You*, *Northern Exposure*, *The Nanny*, *Friends*, *Brooklyn Bridge*, *Dharma and Greg*, *The Larry Sanders Show*, and most of all, *Seinfeld*.

I. JEWS ON TV

In their book *The Chosen Image*, the Pearls offer a fascinating look at the Jewish themes Americans have been exposed to by prime-time TV. There have been portraits of bar and bat mitzvahs, Jewish weddings, anti-Semitism, Chanukah, and, of course, the Holocaust. "Jewish matters," the Pearls write,

"have driven story lines, shaped characters, defined issues, and made appearances on countless TV shows throughout the decades. Indeed, the presence of Jewish themes on television has been a constant throughout the history of television. From its earliest days until today, the great reflector of American life has simply recognized the active place of Jews within that life."⁶

In the same year that *The Beverly Hillbillies* and *Green Acres* disappeared from television screens, *All in the Family* made its debut, placing before the American people a completely different representation of American character and culture. Jewish liberal Norman Lear had created Archie Bunker, who became a beloved icon for millions of television viewers. In an important sense, Archie's primary role was to usher out the older era of a white, male-dominated America, represented by people like himself, and to instruct this soon-to-be disestablished class in the manners and attitudes befitting a new, multicultural America, one in which blacks could own their own businesses and homosexuals could come out of the closet.

Most of all, this new, multicultural America was one in which Jews and all things Jewish had a new-found prominence. "By the end of his twelve years on prime-time television," the Pearls inform us, "Archie Bunker, America's best-known bigot, had come to raise a Jewish child in his home, befriend a black Jew, go into business with a Jewish partner, enroll as a member of Temple Beth Shalom, eulogize his close friend at a Jewish funeral, host a Sabbath dinner, participate in a bat mitzvah ceremony, and join a group to fight synagogue vandalism."⁷

Cultural historians and other astute observers have seen clearly that this shift in focus from America's majority Christian whites to a broad cast of minorities was far from inevitable, for humans themselves construct all cultural products. Although the vast majority of the important players in determining TV programming were Jews, they were at first reluctant to project themselves and their concerns too directly into what appeared on broadcast TV, at least for the first few decades of American television. This was the "too Jewish" conundrum that American Jews had earlier encountered — and conquered — for literature and film.

David Zurawik takes this as his starting point in *The Jews of Prime Time*, asking, "What is 'too Jewish' yet not Jewish enough?" Answer: "the strange history of Jewish characters on prime-time network television." The incongruence to which he refers comes from the fact that nearly all the top TV executives and producers were Jewish, yet they were ambivalent about portraying their own high status or that of Jews in other important areas of American life. To illustrate, he begins with an interview with Jewish comedian Al Franken. Zurawik's direct access to Franken and TV mogul Brandon Tartikoff provides an inside view of Jewish thinking on the "too Jewish" issue.

Tartikoff was concerned about a sketch on NBC Entertainment's highly popular *Saturday Night Live* show, in which actor Tom Hanks plays the fictional

emcee of a game show called "Jew/Not-a-Jew." Alluding to *Laverne & Shirley* costar Penny Marshall, Hanks asks, "Okay, panelists, Jew or not a Jew?" Tartikoff allowed that it was funny "but was it anti-Semitic?" After agonizing over it for a week, he gave the skit a green light, whereupon his phone rang off the hook on Sunday morning "with calls from colleagues, many of whom were Jewish." The most troubling call, said Tartikoff, came from his mother. "I cannot believe it. I'm embarrassed to call you my son. This Jew/Not-a-Jew sketch was the most anti-Semitic thing I've ever seen."

While Tartikoff may have erred in this instance, there were other times he pulled the plug because a sketch or show was "too Jewish." Why did Tartikoff and other Jewish executives so often react this way? To Franken, it was because "there's a feeling among some Jews that 'Hey, let's not get too out front in our Jewishness, because people might not like it.' ... 'Hey, let's not...draw fire. There's a lot of us in this business, let's not call attention to it, you know.'" This may well explain why so many Jewish network executives and TV programmers shaded or avoided any connection between Jewish identity and what characters said or did on so many shows. In fact, Tartikoff in 1991 nearly canceled *Seinfeld* after just one episode for being — surprise — "too Jewish."

Zurawik finds David Sarnoff and William Paley, respective founders of NBC and CBS, responsible for leading the way in Jewish self-censorship. While many other powerful Jewish executives respected this censorship, Zurawik believes that Paley set the bar when it came to avoiding "surplus Jewish visibility." He wrote, "There is no doubt that Paley is one of the primary reasons there were no Jewish characters on network television from 1955 to 1972." Given the "incredible power Paley wielded in television during those years," it is understandable that his strong desire not to see Jewish characters on television would be honored.⁸

Of course, Zurawik's observations go only so far, for, in addition to mid-70s shows like *Archie Bunker*, one could also find heavily Jewish-inflected shows like *Bridget Loves Bernie*, *Rhoda*, *Welcome Back Kotter*, *Barney Miller*, and *Taxi*. In any case, the taboo vanished in many respects around the same year that Tartikoff gave the okay to *Seinfeld*, after which overtly Jewish shows became the norm across the spectrum, from sitcoms to late-night shows on cable (think of Comedy Central's *The Daily Show with Jon Stewart* [born Jonathan Stuart Leibowitz in 1962] or *Larry King Live* with Larry King [born Lawrence Harvey Ziegler]). Mostly, however, the Jewish shows that blossomed in the 1990s were of the *Mad about You* variety, which brings us to the issues that became the ones most featured: assimilation and intermarriage.

Both Zurawik and the Pearls devote extensive space to these issues, which in most ways mirror earlier analyses from film, when critics and scholars could mine the likes of *Marjorie Morningstar* (1958), *Funny Girl* (1968), *Goodbye Columbus* (1969), *Portnoy's Complaint* (1972), or *Annie Hall* (1977) for cultural ore. As in film, when television approached these themes, the drama centered

almost exclusively around the Jewish male courting the Gentile female, or, as critics so lovingly referred to her, the *shiksa*. Of the *shiksa*, one critic wrote:

In the 1990s, it seems that the mother of every fictional female on television is advising her daughter to find a nice Jewish boy. And the daughters are listening. From hour-long dramas, "Sisters," "Chicago Hope," and "Murder One," to 30-minute comedies, "Mad about You," "Cybill," "Partners," "Bless This House," "The Single Guy," "The Larry Sanders Show," "Friends," "Love and War," "Seinfeld," and "Murphy Brown," Jewish men are dating – and marrying – Gentile women in numbers far exceeding any other interethnic relationships currently on television.

The most likely reason for such images, the critic argues, is that Jewish men run Hollywood.⁹ But do Jews really have that much power in television?

II. JEWISH POWER IN TV

From its origins, Hollywood has been stamped with a Jewish identity, but nobody else was supposed to know about it. But somehow, no matter how thorough the attempt to suppress or disguise it, Jewishness is going to bob to the surface anyway.

Stephen J. Whitfield¹⁰

Mogul Hollywood

Hollywood has always been a Jewish milieu. This fact has been well documented by Neal Gabler, Michael Medved, Ben Stein, and others who have chronicled Hollywood's initial and continuing Jewish makeup and sensibility, however masked it may at times be. In his 1988 book *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood*, author Neal Gabler celebrates the period of Hollywood's founding through the end of the studio and mogul era, thus buttressing the belief that "The American Dream—is a Jewish invention."¹¹ Indeed, as Medved documents:

The storefront theaters of the late teens were transformed into the movie palaces of the twenties by Jewish exhibitors. And when sound movies commandeered the industry, Hollywood was invaded by a battalion of Jewish writers, mostly from the East. The most powerful talent agencies were run by Jews. Jewish lawyers transacted most of the industry's business and Jewish doctors ministered to the industry's sick. Above all, Jews produced the movies.¹²

Social scientist and media gadfly Ernest van den Haag adds further comments to how power is employed and how Jews in particular use it, in this case with respect to cinema's younger sibling, television:

The Jewish cultural establishment goes far beyond the strictly intellectual and academic milieu. It is spread throughout the communications industry and thereby enters almost every home in America. Hollywood

has always been a largely Jewish institution...On the other hand, the television industry was founded and staffed by a much later generation of Jews.¹³

What are the consequences that flow from this state of affairs?

MacDonald notes that "Jewish contributions to entertainment and the media have often had the function of promoting positive images of Judaism and multiculturalism and negative images of Christianity and European ethnic interests and identification."¹⁴ Cursory as well as in-depth analysis verifies this claim. Take, for instance, the Pearls' conclusion to their exhaustive investigation of Jewish images on television, *The Chosen Image: Television's Portrayal of Jewish Themes and Characters*:

Since the inception of network television half a century ago, hundreds of popular TV shows have portrayed Jewish themes. Such topics as anti-Semitism, intermarriage, Jewish lore and traditions, Israel, the Holocaust, and questions of Jewish identity have been featured in a wide range of television genres...What is the television image of Jews and Judaism that emerges from this fascinating wealth of programming? In nearly every instance, the Jewish issues have been portrayed with respect, relative depth, affection, and good intentions, and the Jewish characters who appear in these shows have, without any doubt, been Jewish—often depicted as deeply involved in their Judaism.¹⁵

One interesting outcome of the Jewish-controlled portrayal of religion has been "the unraveling of the TV-melded Christmas-Chanukah holiday" into one where Chanukah can stand on its own merits. In an episode of *Frank's Place*, for example, when a non-Jew is invited to a Chanukah dinner at the home of lawyer Bubba Weisberger, the audience is treated to a lengthy and positive account of the holiday, one "without any thought of Christmas." On an episode of the 1992 *WIOU*, "Chanukah held center stage. The defacing of a Chanukah menorah in a public park by anti-Semitic thugs became the occasion for series regular Willis Teitlebaum" to explore his feelings and Jewish identity. This linkage of Chanukah with anti-Semitism was also the theme of an episode of *Sisters*, when vandals attacked a Jewish restaurant.¹⁶ Here, then, is the privileging of a minor holiday of a small but powerful minority, while at the same time the Jew-as-victim message is reinforced.

The themes of anti-Semitism and Jewish victimhood have been and continue to be openly or subtly woven into story lines across the board, but the most urgent reminders of Jewish victimhood have come in the form of scores of highly graphic televised Holocaust specials, beginning with NBC's 1978 airing of the four-part miniseries *Holocaust*, which was seen by up to one hundred million Americans. In addition, notes historian Peter Novick,

the Anti-Defamation League distributed ten million copies of its sixteen-page tabloid, *The Record*, to promote the drama. Jewish organizations successfully lobbied major newspapers to serialize Gerald Green's novelization of his television play, or to publish special inserts on the

Holocaust. (*The Chicago Sun-Times* distributed hundreds of thousands of copies of its insert to local schools.) The American Jewish Committee, in cooperation with NBC, distributed millions of copies of a study guide for viewers; teachers' magazines carried other curricular material tied to the program. Jewish organizations worked with the National Council of Churches to prepare other promotional and educational materials, and organized advance viewings for religious leaders. The day the series began was designated "Holocaust Sunday"; various activities were scheduled in cities across the country; the National Conference of Christians and Jews distributed yellow stars to be worn on that day.¹⁷

Television viewers have likely also noticed the commercial-free Ford Motor Company-sponsored airing on NBC of Spielberg's *Schindler's List*. It seems unlikely that a major American corporation will soon sponsor a commercial-free viewing of Mel Gibson's *The Passion of the Christ*, especially now that Gibson has been involved in what some are calling an anti-Semitic affair.¹⁸

III. HOSTILITY TOWARD GENTILES

If the average American were asked if a culture war was currently being waged in America, the significant number likely to answer in the affirmative would point to the ongoing liberal-conservative split, or, as it is now more commonly known, the battle between the blue states and red states. Were one to posit that Jews were waging an equally vitriolic (and not totally unrelated) war on majority Americans, there would likely be strenuous denials. In fact, however, leading intellectuals have described such a war — or *kulturkampf* — in minute detail.

John Murray Cuddihy argued in his 1974 book, *The Ordeal of Civility: Freud, Marx, Levi-Strauss, and the Jewish Struggle with Modernity*, that, at least since the Enlightenment, a significant segment of Jewry has considered itself to be at war with the Gentile world and has acted accordingly. He wrote, "the ordeal in question involves the pain felt by newly emancipated Eastern Jews who began to realize that the Christian societies of Western Europe had overtaken them culturally, financially, artistically, and intellectually." According to Cuddihy, the Jewish response to this trauma has been anger and "vindictive objectivity"; worse, "they continue unabated into our own time because Jewish Emancipation continues into our own time."¹⁹

Just as Cuddihy shows how the Jews of the title have prosecuted their war on Gentiles in terms of psychoanalysis, class struggle and structuralism, he also shows how it is being waged more recently, for example in American fiction of late 1950s and 1960s. He could probably have found endless examples in the decades of televised cultural messages as well.

Historian Albert Lindemann prefers an allegorical approach to this *kulturkampf*, beginning with one of the founding myths of the Jewish people, the story of the feuding brothers Esau and Jacob (Gen. 25, 23–26). Lindemann argues

that this Jewish-derived division between Jew and Gentile has relevance from ancient times to our own day, including a Jewish tendency (even “instinct,” in Lindemann’s words) “to view surrounding Gentile society as pervasively flawed, polluted, or sick.” In modern times this tendency is to be found in ideologies such as “socialism (both Marxist and anarchist), Zionism, and various forms of the psychiatric worldview (Freudian psychoanalysis and related schools).”²⁰ Remarkably, Lindemann makes these arguments with no indication that Cuddihy’s work has informed him, suggesting a fortuitous simultaneous discovery on the order of the simultaneous but independent invention of calculus by Newton and Leibniz in the late 1600s.

Writing twenty-four years after Cuddihy and only a year after Lindemann, MacDonald makes a more straightforward case for a Jewish war on Gentiles. Applying a social identity approach, MacDonald illuminates Jews’ “very deep antipathy to the entire gentile-dominated social order, which is viewed as anti-Semitic.” MacDonald goes further than David Hollinger’s claim that the increased Jewish presence in academia (and elsewhere) has resulted merely in a generic “cosmopolitanism,” noting, “This antipathy toward gentile-dominated society was often accompanied by a powerful desire to avenge the evils of the old social order.” Referring to the many Jewish families “which around the breakfast table, day after day, in Scarsdale, Newton, Great Neck, and Beverly Hills have discussed what an awful, corrupt, immoral, undemocratic, racist society the United States is,” MacDonald argues that there were clearly elements of active hostility toward Middle American culture in general.²¹ If so, it should be easy to find such hostility in modern TV fare.

Hostility toward Religion

It is only natural that a group should find the symbols cherished by its perceived opponents threatening or irritating, which is a likely reason for the perennial Jewish attacks on Christian symbols in the United States. Norman Podhoretz admits that such heavily Jewish groups as the American Jewish Congress and the American Civil Liberties Union often oppose Christian beliefs in America, ridiculing these beliefs and attempting to undermine their public position.²²

This observation is consistent with the findings of Hollywood film critic Michael Medved, who has written and spoken about the fact that so much of what emanates from Hollywood has become shockingly anti-religious, particularly with respect to Christianity. While Medved does not state it explicitly, we are witnessing the effects of a kind of cultural hegemony being exercised by a distinct group of Hollywood writers, producers, et al. who, as we have seen, are predominately Jewish. Medved writes:

In the ongoing war on traditional values, the assault on organized faith represents the front to which the entertainment industry has most clearly committed itself. On no other issue do the perspectives of the show

business elites and those of the public at large differ more dramatically. Time and again, the producers have gone out of their way to affront the religious sensibilities of ordinary Americans.²³

Citing a 1992 study which found that "89 percent of Americans claim affiliations with an organized faith," Medved describes in detail how Hollywood has produced fare that is hostile to its audience's beliefs. He notes that many made-for-television movies are consistently grim regarding Christian identification. For instance, in the miniseries *The Thorn Birds*, handsome Richard Chamberlain plays a tormented priest who has broken his vows of celibacy. William Shatner, in his role as *T.J. Hooker*, tracks down a "ruthless, Scripture-spouting crook who leaves Bibles as calling cards at the scene of his crimes." ABC's *The Women of Brewster Place* shows a preacher luring a woman to his bed, while in one episode of *Unsub* "Bishop Grace" murders two teenage girls in his congregation. NBC's *In the Heat of the Night* aired an episode in which "Reverend Haskell" expires just after enjoying an affair with one of his parishioners. Two "Bible thumpin' hayseeds" appear as kidnappers on *Shannon's Deal*, paired up with "a devout Christian who murders his wife and then justifies the killing as 'an act of God...unstoppable as a flood.'" ²⁴

Christianity has fared just as poorly on animated TV shows. Fox Television Network's *The Simpsons* featured a scene in which the family gathered around the table to say grace, and Bart solemnly intones, "Dear God, we paid for all this stuff ourselves, so thanks for nothing." A more aggressive expression of disrespect was written into the Christmas episode from *South Park* entitled "Mr. Hankey, the Christmas Poo." A parody of the 1965 television special *A Charlie Brown Christmas*, this episode featured human feces as the spirit of Christmas, the obvious message being that "Christmas is shit." What we can see being played out in the visual media, then, is one aspect of the Jewish-Gentile kulturkampf in modern America.

Hollywood insider Benjamin Stein confirms this impression. In the 1976 essay "Whatever happened to small-town America?," he explores television's consistent hostility toward rural (read majority Christian) Americans. Stein begins by noting that "a truly great number of the people who write movies and television shows are Jewish," and given their largely urban upbringing, when they create TV fare they are not telling it "like it is."

Instead they are giving us the point of view of a small and extremely powerful section of the American intellectual community — those who write for the mass visual media...What is happening, as a consequence, is something unusual and remarkable. A national culture is making war upon a way of life that is still powerfully attractive and widely practiced in the same country...Feelings of affection for small towns run deep in America, and small-town life is treasured by millions of people. But in the mass culture of the country, a hatred for the small town is spewed out on television screens and movie screens every day...Television and the movies are America's folk culture, and they have nothing but

contempt for the way of life of a very large part of the folk...People are told that their culture is, at its root, sick, violent, and depraved, and this message gives them little confidence in the future of that culture. It also leads them to feel ashamed of their country and to believe that if their society is in decline, it deserves to be.²⁵

IV. DENIAL AND DECEPTION REGARDING JEWISH POWER

As we saw earlier, any number of Jewish observers are willing to acknowledge the immense power of Jews in American media, particularly in Hollywood film and television, although this view cannot yet be described as conventional wisdom as far as the general public is concerned. But for informed observers, identity always matters. In *Jews and the Left*, Arthur Liebman observes that “one of the most important pieces of information a researcher can gather on a social movement is the socioeconomic composition of its membership.”²⁶ The same can be said about the ethnic composition of those openly commenting on Jewish power in the media: They are overwhelmingly Jews themselves. In contrast, Gentiles are routinely discouraged from noticing, yet alone analyzing, this phenomenon which is crucial in a democracy. As MacDonald notes, “Jewish groups have made any critical discussion of Jewish issues off limits, and that’s vitally important because, yes, Jews are a very powerful group.”²⁷

It appears that a regime of silence has been imposed, with ample rewards going to those Gentiles willing to toe the party line and a graduated range of punishments being administered to those unwilling to abide by the established rules of discourse. Prominent examples have been cited by MacDonald et al., including the case of young British journalist William Cash. He is the one who, with innocent candor, noted the Hollywood presence of Michael Ovitz, Steven Spielberg, David Geffen, Jeffrey Katzenberg, Lew Wasserman, Sidney Sheinberg, Barry Diller, Gerald Levin, Herbert Allen, and others and wrote of the Spielberg-Geffen-Katzenberg “Dream Team:”

But in one respect at least this particular combination of talents, or “talent combo” in the local argot, will start out on the right foot. Like the old mogul founders of the early studios — and unlike most other failed build-your-own studio merchants — they are Jewish.²⁸

This gaffe broke a cardinal rule, as articulated by columnist Joe Sobran: “Jewish control of the major media in the media age makes the enforced silence both paradoxical and paralyzing. Survival in public life requires that you know all about it, but never refer to it.”²⁹ Vincent Brook, author of *Something Ain’t Kosher Here*, belongs to the camp that would enforce this silence among Gentiles, applauding the fact that a group critical of some TV portrayals “refrained from reviving the old canard of Jewish media control.” Brook then elides attribution to a quote on the Cash affair, putting these words in Cash’s mouth: “[A] self-perpetuating Jewish cabal had created an exclusive Power

Elite in Hollywood."³⁰ Never mind that Brook's book is all about Jewish prominence in Hollywood.

Brook follows this censure of Cash with a condemnation of Marlon Brando for his unsettling statements on *Larry King Live*, claiming that Jews run Hollywood and exploit stereotypes of minorities. "Hollywood is run by Jews, it is owned by Jews," he began, "but we never saw the kike because they know perfectly well that's where you draw the wagons around."³¹ Two comments about Brando's observation are in order. First, Brando could easily have added majority Christians to the list of exploited Hollywood stereotypes, as we saw above, but perhaps his greatest insight was about the "kike." Though an unfortunate choice of words, it does point to the fact that we do not begin to see in Hollywood fare even a fraction of the real doings of real Jews.

Leaving aside the touchy issue of modern Israel, we can still focus on two crucial aspects of Jewish American behavior that are essentially absent from TV discourse: the numerous wrongdoings of individual Jews and Jewish groups,³² and the pervasive power of Jews in media, finance, politics, education, and a host of other important areas. Try to find a show that features the illegal activities of an Ivan Boesky or Michael Milken or dozens of other American Jews discussed in books like Connie Bruck's 1988 *Predators' Ball* or James B. Stewart's 1991 *Den of Thieves*.³³

For detailed accounts of massive Jewish power in modern America, see what J. J. Goldberg, current editor of *The Jewish Forward*, wrote in his 1996 book *Jewish Power*, or political scientist Benjamin Ginsberg in his 1993 *The Fatal Embrace: Jews and the State*. Alone, these two instances of Jewish privilege in acknowledging and describing Jewish power amply demonstrate the rule about selective silence on the topic, but the greater point is that the American TV viewer does not see *any* representations on television of this vast power, unless one is willing to acknowledge the pervasive presence of Jewish reporters (Wolfe Blitzer, Barbara Walters, Mike Wallace, Ted Koppel, et al.), talk show hosts (Larry King, Jon Stewart, et al.), actors, comedians, spokespersons, et al. as an indirect display of Jewish prominence and power. Where, however, is the *direct* portrayal of this power? Miles Silverberg on *Murphy Brown*? If so, this kind of mocking of the belief in Jewish power in the newsroom serves to trivialize the debate, if not eliminate it completely. The absence of any narrative of Jewish power—political, financial, academic—forces us to reconsider the concept of "surplus visibility" and its application to American television.

V. HOW HIDING THEIR POWER HELPS THE JEWS

In *The Jews of Prime-Time*, Zurawik describes the sociological concept of "surplus visibility": "the feeling among minority members and others that whatever members of that group say or do, it is too much and, moreover, they are being too conspicuous about it." He accepts the conventional wisdom

that membership in a “particular community of production” will result in less stereotypical images of that community and images “more representative of social reality.” The paradox he finds is that this “is not what happened with Jews and television.”³⁴ The Jewish “self-censorship” exhibited by important gatekeepers of TV programming such as William Paley, David Sarnoff, and Brandon Tartikoff can best be described as a form of deception in which Jewish producers of culture are highly conscious of the perceived interests of the Jewish community, and in which the question “Is it good for the Jews?” is often uppermost in their thoughts.

Almost without exception, a refusal to note the sheer unreality of Jewish images in popular culture is found. For example, film critic Lester Friedman makes the same error:

Unlike films about other American minorities, movies with Jews were often scrutinized by one segment of that minority group with the power to decide how the entire group would be presented to society as a whole. The resulting images of Jews in films constitute a rich and varied tapestry woven by several generations of moviemakers responding to the world around them.

This is fair enough as far as it goes, but he loses sight of reality when he continues, “Their works dynamically depict both the Jews’ profound impact on American society and that society’s perception of the Jews within its midst...But whether they explain or exploit their Jewish characters, *all these films either implicitly or explicitly show how Jews affect American life...* [emphasis added].”³⁵

This is precisely where he gets it wrong, for these films, and the voluminous oeuvre of TV shows, *hide* the reality of how Jews affect American life. Where have we seen explicit representations of how Jewish activists have marched through the institutions of psychoanalysis, anthropology, or the Old and New Left? Where the Jewish role in Communism and its attendant infamies? Where the dramas featuring Jews agitating for open borders and other “immigration reform”? Most pointedly, where are the new shows starring Jewish neoconservatives in their quest for perpetual war in the Middle East?

As a reality counterbalance along the lines of the popular 24 series, in which indefatigable federal agent Jack Bauer (Keifer Sutherland) fights around the clock to protect the nation from terrorists, where is the series starring Ron Silver as Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff, and Jewish actors as his Israeli-born mother and rabbi father? Richard Dreyfus could play veteran Jewish activist Gregg Rickman, who was recently sworn in as the State Department’s Special Envoy for Monitoring and Combating Anti-Semitism. If pugnacious Ed Asner was unavailable to play the recurring role of Abraham Foxman of the Anti-Defamation League, perhaps Harvey Keitel could do the honors. What is the likelihood of seeing anything remotely similar in the new TV season?

VI. JAMES JAEGER ON *CRASH*

This deception is no doubt what so aggravated film critic James Jaeger, prompting him to excoriate Paul Haggis for his racial and ethnic depictions in *Crash*, the 2005 Oscar winner for Best Picture. Echoing Brando, Jaeger notes the film's ensemble of a diverse array of characters "crashing" into each other in a racially tense Los Angeles, but charges that "Nowhere is it shown that Jews also CRASH into Blacks, Whites, Latinos, Iranians, Asians, and Persians and profoundly affect THEIR lives — especially in Hollywood where CRASH is set and Jews comprise a dominating minority in the Los Angeles area." Rather, Jaeger sees the same old display of select diversity on-screen but no mention of the lack of diversity behind-the-scenes. "Why doesn't Paul write a feature that is set in the executive suites of say Warner Bros. or Paramount where the dominating minority is properly and accurately acknowledged as Jewish?"

One of the consequences of this unbalanced ethnic representation in the executive suite is a plethora of images attacking the values of the American Majority. The films that are financed or distributed by the dominating minority comprising liberal Jewish males "continue to emphasize the homosexual-lesbian agenda, Zionism, uncritical support for Israel, and endless Holocaust movies to perpetuate the myth of Jewish victimology." Further, "stories that bash and invalidate the nuclear family unit or stay-at-home mothers thrive. Stories that divide or poke fun at the Christian community, invalidate its history or attempt to dilute and eradicate its holidays, beliefs and/or values are financed and released by Hollywood insiders with abandon."³⁶

I would argue that Jaeger's description of Hollywood's film agenda differs not a whit from its TV agenda, which is to "make movies that tell the stories that an elite group of insiders agree with and want told to the exclusion of almost all other stories and themes."³⁷ Clearly, this agenda produces winners and losers.

VII. THE PROPAGANDA POWER OF TV

Political scientist Michael Parenti has investigated how media power is wielded. In *Inventing Reality: The Politics of the Mass Media*, he writes:

The existence of a common pool of culturally determined (systemic, nonconspiratorial) political values cannot be denied, but where did this common pool come from? Who or what determines the determining element in the culture itself? And can we reduce an entire culture...to a set of accumulated habituations and practices that simply build up over time? ...A closer look reveals that the unconsciously shared "established" view...is not shared by everyone and is not in fact all that established...In other words, it may be true that most media elites...share common views on these subjects, but much — and sometimes most — of the public does not. What we have then is an "established *establishment* view" which is

given the highest media visibility, usually to the exclusion of views held by large dissident sectors of the populace. The “dominant shared values and beliefs” that are supposedly the natural accretions and expressions of our common political culture, are not shared by all or most...although they surely are dominant in that they tend to preempt the field of opinion visibility...In sum, media owners — like other social groups — consciously pursue their self-interest and try to influence others in ways that are advantageous to themselves.³⁸

It is given “the highest media visibility” by being shown repeatedly on television. Such repetition is necessary for conditioning an uncritical audience to the message at hand. Media experts note, “There is little reason to believe that a single film or even group of films significantly influences audiences’ views over the long haul.” If, however, a constant and unwavering message is broadcast repeatedly, “it is reasonable to believe that such presentations will affect audiences to a significant extent.”³⁹ Or, as Margaret Miles puts it, “No one film has iconic power, but the recurrence of similar images *across* films weaves those images into the fabric of the common life of American society...We get, at a subliminal and hence utterly effective level, not the narrative but the conventions of Hollywood film.”⁴⁰ If movies can achieve this, imagine the power of television, which most people, including children, spend incomparably more time watching than film.

By way of an elegy for the American Majority, I note the conclusion MacDonald drew in 1998 about the Gentile response to the sustained ideological attacks on its culture and value. He believes that avoiding open ethnic strife in America means that “at least some ethnic groups be unconcerned that they are losing in the competition. I regard this last possibility as unlikely in the long run.”⁴¹ At least for the present, it appears that majority Americans are indeed all too unconcerned about losing the competition, perhaps because they are so busy watching television and, to play on a title from Neil Postman, “amusing themselves to death.”⁴²

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ENDNOTES

1. Ernest van den Haag, *The Jewish Mystique* (New York: Stein and Day, 1969), 129.
2. “Is Hollywood Too Jewish?,” *Moment* (Aug. 1996): 37.
3. “Seriously Spielberg,” in Lester D. Friedman and Brent Notbohm, eds., *Steven Spielberg* (Jackson, Mississippi: University Press of Mississippi, 2000), 171.
4. Vincent Brook, *Something Ain’t Kosher Here: The Rise of the “Jewish” Sitcom* (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 49. Incidentally, *The Beverly*

Hillbillies, *Green Acres*, and *Petticoat Junction* were all creations of Jewish Paul Henning. See Paul Buhle, *From the Lower East Side to Hollywood: Jews in American Popular Culture* (New York: Verso 2004), 263 (n. 39).

5. Neal Gabler coined this phrase for *An Empire of Their Own: How the Jews Invented Hollywood* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1988).

6. Jonathan Pearl and Judith Pearl, *The Chosen Image: Television's Portrayal of Jewish Themes and Characters* (Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland & Company, Inc., 1999), 229.

7. Pearl and Pearl, *The Chosen Image*, 5.

8. David Zurawik, *The Jews of Prime Time* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2003), 2–6, 62–63. Paley's dominance in the industry was such that for many years Paley's CBS took in 85 percent of the total profits for all three major networks.

9. Alina Sivorinovsky, "Images of Modern Jews on Television," *Midstream* 41:9 (December 1, 1995): 39–40. It is interesting to note that the shiksa theme, as an internal, gendered Jewish narrative about the Jewish male's sexual conquest or attainment of the Gentile woman, appears as unproblematic, which is odd considering how sensitive interracial and interethnic sexual encounters have been in American history. Modern scholars tend to strongly condemn views of women as sexual objects. For example, one finds abundant accounts (and condemnations) of instances where white males portray and possess Asian women as sex objects. This theme is apparent from *Madame Butterfly* to scores of Hollywood films, and has been unpacked in works such as Mari Yoshihara's *Embracing the East: White Women and American Orientalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) and "re-education" documentaries like *Picturing Oriental Girls* and *Slaying the Dragon*, where the trope of a masculine, dominant West and feminine, submissive East is interrogated.

10. Stephen J. Whitfield, *American Space, Jewish Time: Essays in Modern Culture and Politics* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, Inc., 1996), 151.

11. Quoted in Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own*, 1.

12. Gabler, *An Empire of Their Own*, 1–2.

13. Van den Haag, *The Jewish Mystique*, 141–142.

14. See <http://www.csulb.edu/~kmacd/books-derbyshire.html#2nl>

15. Pearl and Pearl, *The Chosen Image*, 5.

16. Pearl and Pearl, *The Chosen Image*, 32–39.

17. Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1999), 210. Novick notes that Jewish agencies separately targeted Gentile and Jewish audiences, and in the case of the ADL, they appear to have engaged in deliberate deception, where the study guides for Jewish children emphasized Christian anti-Semitism and denigrated assimilated Jews.

18. In the early hours of July 28, 2006, Gibson was pulled over for possible drunken driving. Los Angeles County Sheriff's Deputy James Mee, who is Jewish, made the arrest, after which Gibson was quoted as blurting out "a barrage of anti-Semitic remarks about 'f—ing Jews,' including the claim that 'the Jews are responsible for all the wars in the world.'" Finally, Gibson asked the officer, "Are you a Jew?" (Gabriel Sanders, "Gibson's New Line: Forgive Me, Foxman, for I Have Sinned...", *The Jewish Daily Forward*, August 4, 2006).

19. John Murray Cuddihy, *The Ordeal of Civility: Freud, Marx, Levi-Strauss and the Jewish Struggle with Modernity* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2nd ed., 1987 [1974]), 68.

20. Albert S. Lindemann, *Esau's Tears: Modern Anti-Semitism and the Rise of the Jews* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 13–15.
21. Kevin MacDonald, *The Culture of Critique: An Evolutionary Analysis of Jewish Involvement in Twentieth-Century Intellectual and Political Movements* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 85–86.
22. Podhoretz in *Commentary* (1995): 30, cited in MacDonald, *The Culture of Critique*, 148.
23. Michael Medved, *Hollywood vs. America: Popular Culture and the War on Traditional Values* (New York: HarperCollins, 1992), 50.
24. Medved, *Hollywood vs. America*, 80–81.
25. Benjamin Stein, "Whatever Happened to Small-town America?," *The Public Interest* (Summer 1976), 22–23. In a later book, *The View from Sunset Boulevard: America as Brought to You by the People Who Make Television* (New York: Basic Books, 1979), Stein shows how Norman Lear had an extremely negative view of (Gentile) rural America: "In TAT, Norman Lear's production company, two shows set in small towns have appeared within the last two years — 'Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman' and 'Fernwood 2Night.' In both shows, what Marx called 'the idiocy of rural life' comes across powerfully. The small Ohio town of Fernwood, not quite rural and not quite industrial, is full of bigots, Klansmen, quacks, hillbillies, and religious frauds" (72).
26. Arthur Liebman, *Jews and the Left* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 1979), ix–xi.
27. See <http://www.csulb.edu/~kmacd/books-derbyshire.html#2nl>.
28. William Cash, "Kings of the Deal," *The Spectator* (October 29, 1994): 14.
29. Joe Sobran, "The Buchanan Frenzy," *Sobran's* (March 1996), 3. Though Cash found defense in the form of his Jewish editor, Dominic Lawson, he nonetheless was the target of strident rebuke from the American side of the Atlantic.
30. Brook, *Something Ain't Kosher Here*, 171.
31. Marlon Brando, *Larry King Live*, Friday, April 5, 1996.
32. For example, in 2002, the Anti-Defamation League settled a lawsuit in which it was accused of spying on San Francisco-area activists. The ADL's chief intelligence-gatherer in the Bay Area, Roy Bullock, was linked to San Francisco police inspector Tom Gerard, who later pled no contest to a charge of illegally accessing government information. (Bob Egelko, "Jewish Defense Group Settles S.F. Spying Suit," *San Francisco Chronicle*, February 23, 2002). In another case, in 2001, a federal judge upheld most of a \$10 million defamation suit against the ADL for labeling a Denver-area couple as anti-Semites. (Marc Perelman, "Judge Slams ADL for Hurting Couple Tarrred as 'Anti-Semites,'" *The Forward*, April 13, 2001.) Two senior employees of another important Jewish group, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), were fired after being accused of passing classified U.S. information to the government of Israel. According to documents, the two employees are policy director Steve Rosen and senior analyst Keith Weissman. (Dan Eggen and Jerry Markon, "2 Senior AIPAC Employees Ousted," *Washington Post*, April 21, 2005, A8). In addition to AIPAC's problems with this scandal, a robust controversy has broken out over the level of clout held by the institution. John Mearsheimer, a West Point graduate and now distinguished professor of political science at the University of Chicago, and Stephen Walt, academic dean of Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, are credited with arguing that "a small group of Israel's supporters inside and outside of

government have a disproportionate influence over American foreign policy toward the Middle East, and this works to the detriment of U.S. security." Their essay, "The Israel Lobby," was published in the *London Review of Books* and continues to generate intense discussion and controversy. (See Michael C. Desch, "Prophets in Their Own Land: How to Go from Respected Academic to Anti-Semite—in One Simple Step," *The American Conservative*, June 19, 2006).

33. Connie Bruck, *The Predators' Ball: The Inside Story of Drexel Burnham and the Rise of the Junk Bond Traders* (New York: Penguin Books, 1988) and James B. Stewart, *Den of Thieves* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991). When director Oliver Stone put this issue on the big screen in *Wall Street* (1987), he only tangentially touched on the Jewish identity of the corrupt trader, Gordon Gekko (Michael Douglas). In the sauna scene, Gekko contrasts his own origins with those of the wealthy WASPs in New York, who are more interested in animals in the zoo than in real people.

34. Zurawik, *The Jews of Prime Time*, 6.

35. Lester D. Friedman, *The Jewish Image in American Film* (Secaucus, NJ: Citadel Press, 1987), 9.

36. Parallels with MacDonald's arguments in *The Culture of Critique* are manifest: "Institutions that promote group ties among gentiles (such as nationalism and traditional gentile religious associations) are actively opposed and subverted, while the structural integrity of Jewish separatism is maintained" (89).

37. James Jaeger, "Paul Haggis, Bigotry & CRASH,"

<http://www.mecfilms.com/universe/articles/crash.htm>, 4 March 2006

38. Michael Parenti, *Inventing Reality: The Politics of the Mass Media* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1986), 241–242.

39. Stephen Powers, David J. Rothman, and Stanley Rothman, *Hollywood's America: Social and Political Themes in Motion Pictures* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1996), 10, 287.

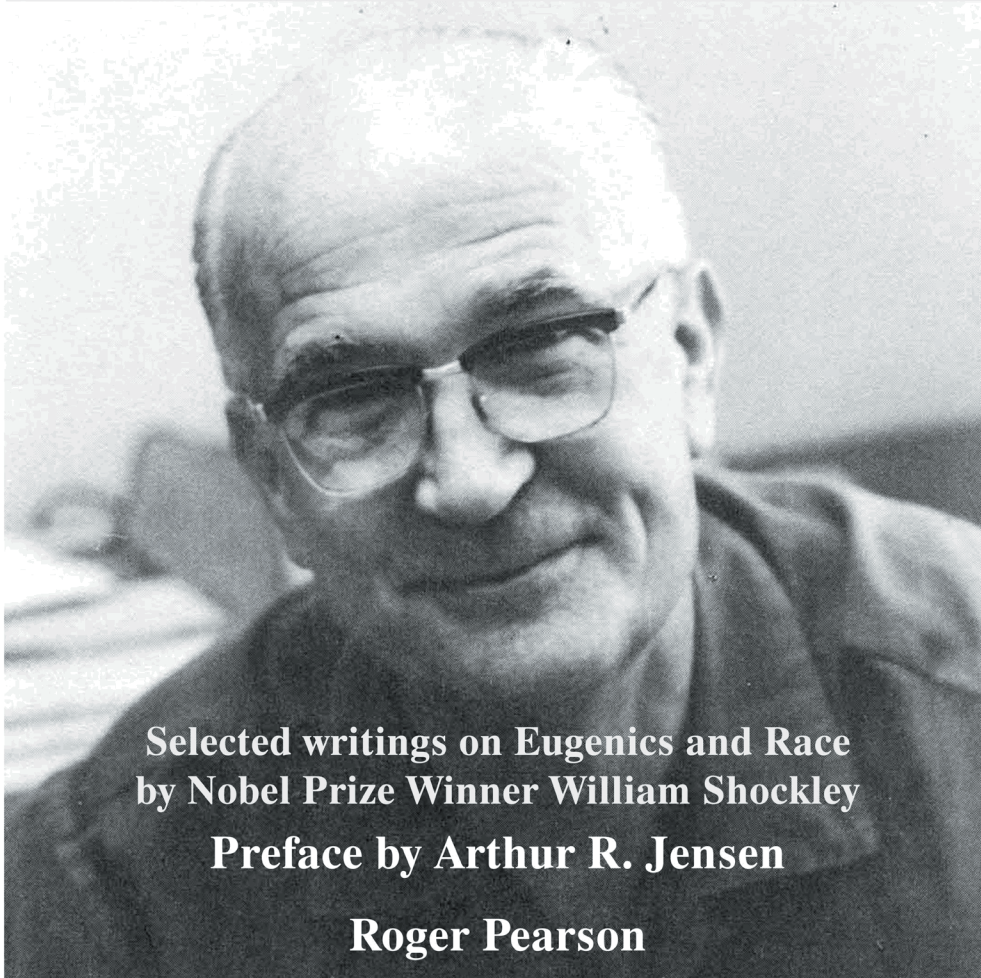
40. Margaret R. Miles, *Seeing and Believing: Religion and Values in the Movies* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996), 190–191.

41. MacDonald, *The Culture of Critique*, 309.

42. Neil Postman, *Amusing Ourselves to Death: Public Discourse in the Age of Show Business* (New York: Viking Adult, 1985).

Shockley

on Eugenics and Race



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The Satan Box



A Catholic Viewpoint on Television

The Satan Box

A Catholic Viewpoint on Television

Dedication

This book is dedicated to my father, Kennett David Bawden, who first named the television the Satan Box in the late 1960's. He noticed how it dominated and neutralized resistance to the corruption going on in the world at that time. May he rest in peace.

Cover art

At Quito, Ecuador the Blessed Virgin warned: “The third meaning of the (sanctuary) lamp's going out is that those times the air will be filled with the spirit of impurity which like a deluge of filth will flood the streets, squares and public places. The licentiousness will be such there will be no more virgin souls in the world.” Today the air is literally filled with impurity beaming down on us from 20,000 miles above us from satellites. Look at the menu on a satellite receiver and this is easily verified. Not only is pornography relatively available, but many other programs that are unsuitable for anyone. Meditate on what a virgin soul is. And how many souls lose their virginity the moment they reach the age of reason?

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Introduction

Since its wide spread introduction into the world in the 1950's television has become the most influential invention of all time. There is no question that television has radically changed the way the world operates and the way people think. In the United States 99 percent of homes have televisions. Actually it is probably higher as few homes don't have a television. It is not socially correct not to have a television or to advocate getting rid of the television, although there is a small vocal minority advocating just that.

Our homes have been redesigned to accommodate television. How many have a TV room instead of a family room. Some even have a true home theater and the television has been called a home theater. And how many televisions do people have? Not only is there a TV room but there is often a television in the bedrooms.

And then go out into the world today. How many public places have a television running. In fact, it is some times hard to get away from the television, when out in public.

Television has changed our lives.

There have been several secular books written on television and the media and several websites devoted to a critical look at both. Although we will consult these sources for some of our information, the main focus of this work is a Catholic viewpoint on television.

The Church has not said a great deal officially about television, because it is such a new invention. However, the Church has said a great deal over the centuries about the components of television, such as the theater. Since the television is a *home theater*, the timeless teaching of the Fathers of the Church and the saints can be applied easily to television. As radio and movies came in, there are some decrees and statements from the Popes on these technologies, which can be applied also to television.

It is time for a critical look at the most influential invention in world history. It is time for a thoroughly Catholic view of television. This book is offered as this.

Saint Ambrose writes: "I am of the opinion that one should not only avoid frequent plays, but all plays." [\[1\]](#) If we apply this to television, then we should avoid habitual viewing certainly and consider giving up television entirely. This may be a hard saying, but it is something that must be considered most seriously in the light of the facts. True Pope Pius XII gives

reserved praise for television in an Encyclical on the subject, but this praise is reserved and new evidence has come to light that was not available before Pope Pius XII died. Some may decide right now to give up television. Others may decide to investigate the matter more deeply. The exercises in the next chapter are essential for anyone who has not yet decided to give up television entirely. In fact, your eternal salvation depends on making these exercises and finishing studying this important book.

Some of the information in this book repeats, but how many people are happy to watch rerun after rerun on television?

Watching Yourself Watch Television

Let us consider a few questions. How must television do I actually watch? What do I watch? Is it good for me or is it bad for me? In order to apply the principles in this book to make our lives better we must first find out where we are at spiritually and materially in regard to the television. And so let us follow a three week program.

Week 1

In the first week keep track of what you do in a typical day without changing your habits. Note when you watch television and what you are watching. At the end of the week, add up how many hours of television you have watched.

Week 2

In the second week, we get a bit more critical. In addition to noting what and when you watch, rate each program. Did it do what you wanted, when you watched it. For instance, did you learn anything from the documentary? Was the recreational program truly entertaining? And above all, starting asking the question, was the program moral or immoral?

Week 3

In the third week and throughout the rest of the program, reduce your television viewing to an hour per day. Choose programs carefully and rate them, when you are finished. Want to watch a two hour movie, then take a day off from television. Yes, you can live without television for a day. In fact, there are people who have gone to the fourth week of the program that inspired this one, that is giving up television entirely. A man in the late 1990's took his television outside and shot it with a shotgun. He says it is the best thing he ever did. We may not be required to go this far, but in examining the information

gathered in these three weeks we will soon realize just how much more careful we need to be with the satan box.

No TV Week

There is a website devoted to this movement to have a No TV Week each year. Let us consider their definition of No TV Week:

No T.V. Week is a week in which Acts of Love is asking families across the world to turn off the television and pick up a book while also spending essential time together as a family.

One week without television is an opportunity for young people to grow their imagination while developing better character.

According to the A.C. Nielsen Co., the average American watches more than 4 hours of TV each day (or 28 hours/week, or 2 months of nonstop TV-watching per year). In a 65-year life, that person will have spent 9 years glued to the tube.

In our study we will find that television is incompatible with the penitential seasons of the year, according to the Fathers of the Church and even Church Councils. Holy Week should always be a no TV week.

Taking a week away from the television, we will find that television is consuming a great deal of our time. What are we going to do with all of this time that we have suddenly freed up?

Try talking to God and letting God talk to you rather than spending time watching and listening to the satan box.



Television and Children

The Legion of Decency, before its demise in the 1960's, rated films in three basic categories, A, B and C. A was acceptable for all, B only for adults and C was condemned and unacceptable for anyone. This type of system is fine for a movie theater, but not for television. If a program cannot be rated as A, acceptable for all, it cannot be viewed in a home

where children live.

Consider the picture above. While the mother is hustling the children off to bed, their father is watching something that is unacceptable for children on the television. When these children get a chance, their curiosity will lead them to watch these programs at someone else's house or some other place. This picture is from the late 1950's, when there was only one television in the house. Today, when the children may have access to a television of their own, what is to prevent them from switching over to see what daddy is watching?

And this picture is from the time, when there was a *family hour* on television, considered suitable for the viewing of all, keeping the more mature themes for the later evening.

We cannot be too cautious in these days of utter apostasy and amorality in the protection of the innocent. The television is the greatest pervayer of filth and ruiner of souls today! Unfortunately many parents are tempted to use the television as a babysitter for their children, exposing them to this danger without taking the necessary precautions. Many parents will prudently lock the television away in a closet or sell it rather than take a chance that their children will be perverted.

In 1947 at the beatification of Blessed Maria Goretti, Pope Pius XII stated, There rises to Our lips the cry of the Saviour: "Woe to the world because of scandals!" (Matthew 18:7). Woe to those who consciously and deliberately spread corruption-in novels, newspapers, magazines, theaters, films, (on television), in a world of immodesty! Woe to the degraded youth who with refined and delicate incision strikes deadly infection deep into a virgin heart! Woe to those fathers and mothers who for want of energy and prudence yield to the caprices of their sons and daughters, renounce their paternal and maternal authority, which in them is a reflection of the divine authority! But woe, too, to all those deluded Christians in name only, who could rise to the situation and who would find themselves backed by legions of good upright people ready to combat scandal with every means at their disposal, but do not!

Strong words, "Woe to those fathers and mothers who for want of energy and prudence yield to the caprices of their sons and daughters, renounce their paternal and maternal authority." God gave you this authority to bring people to heaven, not to assist them in their own damnation! Such parents, who watch all manner of evil on the Satan box and allow their children the same license, shall burn very hot in hell!

In his Encyclical Casti Conubii, Pope Pius XI reminds us, "For now, alas, not secretly nor under cover, but openly, with all sense of shame put aside, now by word, again by writings, by theatrical productions of every kind, by motion pictures portraying vivid scenes, addresses broadcast by means of radio, in short by all the inventions of modern science, the sanctity of marriage is trampled upon and derided. Divorce, adultery, all the basest vices, either are extolled or at least are depicted in such colors as to appear free of all reproach and infamy.

"These thoughts are instilled into men of every class, rich and poor, workers and masters, lettered and unlettered, married and single, godly and godless, old and young: but for these last, an easier prey, the worst snares are laid."

Indeed the worst snares are laid for innocent children, who can learn all manner of evil even before they have reached the age of reason. Can one be surprised that when they are exposed to such rampant evil that they fast become skillful mortal sinners? We must teach children how to seek what is good and avoid what is evil, but how can we do so if we ourselves are dead and seek pleasure and vice, rather than prayer and penance?

Pope Pius XII commenting on the Apostolate of Environment, Address to Italian Catholic Action on September 20, 1942 states, "One can't even imagine the depth of moral corruption to which some authors, editors, artists and others who spread such literary, dramatic, artistic and pictorial works, have not feared to descend. They have changed the use of pen, art, industrial progress and wonderful modern inventions into means and producers of immorality. One sees the adolescent with the fires of passion awakening, plunged into this type of nourishment for his spirit and his eyes. One sees parents taking their sons and daughters to these spectacles. Thus, in their youthful hearts, instead of innocent and holy images, there are impressed deadly desires and pictures which often will never be erased."

"Thus, in their youthful hearts, instead of innocent and holy images, there are impressed deadly desires and pictures which often will never be erased." When Pope Pius XII wrote this the television was still in the developmental stages and

these dangers were at least down the street. And yet in a few years he would warn:

In a letter to Bishops of Italy, January 1, 1954, Pope Pius XII says, "We have constantly before Our mind the painful spectacle of the power for evil and moral ruin of cinema films. How, then, can We not be horrified at the thought that this poisoned atmosphere of materialism, or frivolity, of hedonism, which too often is found in so many theaters, can by means of television be brought into the very sanctuary of the home? Really, one cannot imagine anything more fatal to the spiritual health of a country than to rehearse before so many innocent souls, even within the family circle, those lurid scenes of forbidden pleasure, passion and evil which can undermine and bring to lasting ruin a formation of purity, goodness and healthy personal and social upbringing."

Pope Pius XII compares the home to a sanctuary. Indeed the home, which is formed by the Sacrament of Marriage, should be a sanctuary where the parents and children can seek after salvation away from the dangers of the world. And yet these very dangers can be brought in by turning one switch. All the filth of the districts of the city, which a person would never enter can be brought into his own living room! Beware of these dangers. Home should be a place of tranquility and true peace, where the various family members can find quiet away from the cares of the world.

On January 4, 1954 addressing the Italian Teachers Union, Pope Pius XII stated, "The young man whose holidays are sanctified by his having met whatever task or difficulty that lay in his path, who goes often to Holy Communion (Or in these times, makes spiritual Communions often), who is truthful and loyal, who is quick to help the needy, who respects girlhood and womanhood, and has the strength to shut his eyes and his heart to all that is impure in books, pictures and films-that young man shows that he does truly possess a living faith. And note well that if faith is not living, neither is it active. If others often invest so much energy and effort in the enterprises of the evil one, how much greater will have to be your zeal for the cause of God, of Christ, of the Church!"

Children must be taught to turn away from evil. They are taught, not by our numerous words, but by our actions. We can preach against evil morning, noon and night, but if we indulge in it once a day for even a thirty minute television program, they shall follow our bad example, rather than our constant preaching. And yet many indulge in evil morning, noon and night and fail to speak against it even once. Remember that in times of great evil, we must counter with great faith, faith so as to remove mountains, and this faith is worthless, if we do not remove the mountains of evil around us, as far as we are able, by turning off the radio and television and avoiding all other forms of evil surrounding us today.

In his 1948 address to parish priests and lenten preachers, Pope Pius XII reminds us, "Yet the doctrine of truth is no less attractive, and heroism of virtue no less stimulating, provided that they are not given forth with the coldness of theorem or the dryness of an article of law.

"If the movies play primarily upon the imagination, the doctrine of faith is an effective antidote. It exerts from the young person mental penetration and application. It demands that he learn to judge and distinguish the true from the false, the good from the evil, the licit from the illicit. Do not flee or avoid any difficulty: your young people must have assurance that you can tell them everything that they can ask you, and confide in you."

Pope Pius XII prescribes the cure for the evil today, the doctrine of faith. We must teach children how to judge, how to tell good from evil, true from false and what is permitted from what is forbidden.

We must consider that television is just one form of materialism, which must be decried today. Materialism has led us to seek a soft life free from any true effort, and in 1953 Pope Pius XII warned us about technological materialism, which is now infecting the world. How many have gone into debt to purchase modern technology, when they have no need for the device? Is a radio or television a necessity? Absolutely not! And to become a slave of another through usurious debt for a luxury is a sin, especially if it leads to other sins.

Pope Pius XII on Christmas Eve 1953 warned us, "We cannot, however, omit calling attention to the new forms of materialism which the technological spirit introduces into life. Wherever technology reigns supreme, there human society will be transformed into a colorless mass, into something impersonal and without substance, and this contrary to the clear designs of nature and the Creator. And with particular anxiety We consider the danger threatening the family, which is the strongest principle of order in the society. For the family is capable of inspiring in its members innumerable daily acts of service; it binds them to the home and hearth with the bonds of affection and awakens in each of them a love of the family traditions in the production

and conservation of useful good.”

Many advances today can be used to give us more time to discharge our more important duties, such as the education of children. One may even be permitted to go into debt to purchase these items, but in these cases prudent advice should always be sought. We have many devices, which reduce the amount of time needed to take care of our material chores, such as the microwave, the washer and dryer, etc. The extra time is called for to teach children at home and to pursue spiritual studies for ourself and to teach others.

Dangers for Boys and Girls

In Helps to Purity, pages 187 and 188 we read: “Selling flowers or papers on the street at night. Delaying to answer the calls of nature; e.g., during school Carrying messages, papers or telegrams to dens of vice. Companions. The good may become bad. Housekeepers who lay in a barrel of apples won't content themselves with an occasional look at the top of the barrel to remove the rotten ones. Parents must question children day by day about their chum's actions and conversations; nor let boys and girls play out of their sight in alleys, basements, barns, or in lonesome and dark places. How guilty are those parents who, under the plea of distracting or amusing their children, take them once or twice a week to theatres or shows, where they are exposed to the two-fold fever of music and of scenic representations. The same blame attaches to the toleration of sensual literature.

“As good books help in making saints, bad ones largely share in producing devils incarnate.”

“But scenic representation more vividly affects the mind and leave a more lasting impression than mere reading does. Hence as all kinds of CRIMES ARE PROTRAYED AND CONDONED in many moving-picture shows, are these not the very factory of criminals? Therefore city authorities should everywhere exercise a rigorous censorship and mercilessly exclude all objectionable films.

“Light is the normal excitant of the retina, but a profusion os light hurts that marvelous membrane, so that it becomes incapable of perceiving it, whereby it may forever lose its power of perception. Repeated shocks which spontaneous and provoked emotions impress upon the brains may likewise harmfully affect the integrity of reason and health.” - Popular Discourses on Hygiene, Amusements, Theatrical Play, Music, etc., by J.B. Fonssagrives, M.D.

Pledge of the Legion of Decency

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

I condemn indecent and immoral motion pictures, and those which glorify crime or criminals.

I promise to do what I can do to strengthen public opinion against the production of indecent and immoral films, and to unite with all who protest against them.

I acknowledge my obligation to form a right conscience about pictures that are dangerous to moral life. As a member of the Legion of Decency, I pledge myself to remain away from them. I promise, further, to stay away altogether from places of amusement which show them as a matter of policy.

Unfortunately the Legion of Decency no longer exists and never addressed television. The Legion of decency went out of business about the same time Paul VI eliminated the Index of Prohibited Books and Canon 1399 from the Code of Canon Law. The shepherds no longer safe guarded the sheep.

Television Hypnotizes

What few realize is that their ideas of right and wrong are manipulated by television to obtain the ends of advertisers, etc. This manipulation is done to sell products, products we don't often need and sometimes do not even want. These products are often harmful to us, and therefore we must avoid them under the Natural Law.

In a book The Hidden Persuaders, Vance Packard states (page 1): "This book is an attempt to explore a strange and rather exotic new area of American life. It is about the large-scale efforts being made, often with impressive success, to channel our unthinking habits, our purchasing decisions, and our thought processes by the use of the insights gleaned from psychiatry and the social sciences. Typically these efforts take place beneath our level of awareness; so that the appeals which move us are often, in a sense, "hidden". The result is that many of us are being influenced and manipulated, far more than we realize, in the patterns of our every day lives."

In the chapter entitled The Built-in Sexual Overtone, Mr. Packard begins (page 79): "Infatuation with one's own body is an infantile trait that ... persists in many an adult's subconscious ... The ethics of exploiting it ... to sell goods ... are something else.

"The potency of sex as a sales promoter was not, of course, an original discovery of the depth merchandisers. Sex images have long been cherished by ad men purely as eye stoppers with the depth approach, sex began taking on some interesting twists, ramifications, and subtleties."

Many advertisements on television today are per se (i.e. of themselves) immoral, as We shall consider later on.

On page 166 Mr. Packard states, that it is going further: "The aim now is nothing less than to influence the state of our mind and to channel our behaviour..."

Indeed through the media our behaviour has been channeled in some frightening ways.

How many today are mesmerized by the System of Antichrist just as the snake mesmerizes the bird in order to devour him. There is an inordinant curiosity that will kill just as certainly as the snake will devour the bird he has hypnotized. We spend entirely too much time devoted to a study of the System of Antichrist, which should be devoted to a study of the System of Christ the King which we are supposed to implement in our lives and in the world. How can we bring about the reign of Christ the King, if we do not know His Law for us?

In his book The People Shapers, Vance Packard states (page 164): "The hypnotist does not need to be in the same room with the subject in order to put him into a trance. He can in fact be miles away. One way to hypnotize by remote control is television.

"The hypnotist Herbert Spiegel demonstrated this in an experiment at Columbia. A subject known to be hypnotizable sat in a lounge chair before a TV set. Spiegel was seated before a closed-circuit TV camera four stories below. He talked to the subject just as if the subject were in the same room and put him into a trance. On another case it was a thirty-year old male stranger. While the man was in a trance Spiegel told him that his hands were locked together, and the subject found this to be true. Then Spiegel told the man that he, the subject, was not going out of the trance but that his hands would remain locked until Spiegel came up to him and tapped him on the head. After waiting a while for an elevator, Spiegel entered the room and found the subject normally composed except his hands were locked firmly together. Spiegel tapped his head and his hands parted.

“Spiegel suggests that televised hypnosis could have a number of uses. It could be used in group therapy and mass education. (There is some evidence that simple rote learning can be enhanced by the mental relaxation that goes with hypnosis.) But Spiegel warns that the technique could have dangerous consequences if used in any way in public broadcasts. He has called for stringent controls as a safety measure.”

We can be assured that the safety measures have not been enacted and this experiment reported in 1965 has been perfected.

Wes Moore wrote an article Television: Opiate of the Masses. [2] In this he states: “Paraphysiologist Thomas Mulholland found that after just 30 seconds of watching television the brain begins to produce alpha waves, which indicates torpid (almost comatose) rates of activity. Alpha brain waves are associated with unfocused, overly receptive states of consciousness. A high frequency alpha waves does not occur normally when the eyes are open. In fact, Mulholland's research implies that watching television is neurologically analogous to staring at a blank wall.

“I should note that the goal of hypnosis is to induce slow brain wave states. Alpha waves are present during the “light hypnotic” state used by hypnotherapists for suggestion therapy.”

The greatest mesmerizer and tool of Satan is the television. On this altar is sacrificed much time, which should have been devoted to far better uses. Through this medium the System of Antichrist has destroyed several generations, and led them into the most perverse of errors and vices. If they do not participate directly in vice, they participate indirectly through the means of television. The television which has such a great potential for good has been used for great evil, evil which would otherwise be impossible.

The question We are here considering is whether television can be used for even more perverse ends through hypnosis. The term mesmerized, which We have used comes from the conspirator Mesmer, who is the first modern person to use hypnosis through his heretical magnetic theory which even modern science rejects. This magnetic theory however has been adopted by the Masons and other conspirators, who praise Mesmer. Due to the lack of accurate scientific information and the laxity of Our Predecessors, a definitive statement on hypnotism is impossible. However, We can reach a probable opinion based on the information at hand and Our own observations.

Hypnosis is a nervous sleep induced by artificial external means. As such it is not true restful sleep, but rather a sleep-like state. Although those watching television may appear half asleep, they are not truly resting and therefore after watching will not be restored, as sleep would have restored them, unless they truly fell asleep. Although television may be a recreation, just as the actual attendance at the event depicted would be a recreation or change of scenery, which restores, overuse is not advisable.

Braid, an early hypnotist who perfected and corrected the theories of Mesmer, stated, “fatigue the eyes in order to fatigue the brain.” With television one need not perform any action, but merely sit still and be fatigued. In fact there are people who will become fixated on television to the point that they appear in a hypnotic or semi-hypnotic state. To illustrate this the following experiment may be performed:

Hypnosis can be brought about by fixing the eyes on a single object or a bright object. The television is just such an object. Since the eyes need not move while watching television, they become fixed and one stares at the television. Hypnosis can be brought about by tiring the eyes through staring. To prove that people are in a state resembling hypnosis, We ask you to perform the following experiment:

In a room with several people of varying Intelligence Quotients (IQ's) with a moral television program going, have a look about the room after the program has been running awhile and you will probably see several symptoms of hypnotism. You will see people with glazed over eyes and a total lack of movement. We have performed this experiment and the sight was shocking.

“Basically hypnosis is brought on by one or more of the following things:

“1. fixity of look, which is had because the television is fixed in one place and one need not look about, as one would at a movie, sporting event or play.

“2. this fixity is on a brilliant object, and the television is brilliant.

“3. watching the television, one's eyes are converged on one point, which can also hypnotize.

“4. The television is a sustained and monotonous sensation, which also can bring about hypnosis.

“5. The television lastly is also a vivid sensory impression.”

Although the subject must consent to hypnosis, once a person has consented to a hypnotist, that hypnotist can rehypnotize them at will. Whether the television can hypnotize everyone or only a few, science must determine, and We reserve

final judgement on this point until science can provide more information. However, We know that there is a minority who certainly can be hypnotized by television, and for these, just as for the alcoholic who cannot drink one ounce of liquor without continuing on to drunkenness, these people must abstain completely. For some temperance or moderation means total abstinence, because they cannot partake moderately.

One will notice several symptoms of the second stage of hypnosis, lethargy, in those who watch an inordinant amount of television. The symptoms of lethargy are a great lack of energy, inertness, total indifference, apathy, dullness and sluggishness. These symptoms sound like the description of the couch potato, who sits morning, noon and night, or every possible moment in front of the television.

Rev. Alexander E. Sanford M.D. in his work Pastoral Medicine, on pages 159 and 160 notes the following: "The state of hypnotism consists in an expressly provoked loosening, even in partly unfastening, the normally fast ties between physical and corporeal events. But if loosened once, or even frequently, this tie undoubtedly loses its enduring security, ... Exactly the same symptoms, as expressly provoked in hypnotising, are known to the physicians as primary symptoms of hysteria. ... Hypnosis is nothing else but an artificially provoked hysteria."

Note well, that an important tie between physical and corporeal events is loosened in hypnosis. Therefore as with all serious operations, a proportionately serious reason must be had to permit one to operate. One may not operate to remove a healthy organ, therefore one may not hypnotise without a serious cause, and even in this case hypnosis may be found to be forbidden, although We do not currently possess sufficient information to render a final decision. Certainly one could not be hypnotised by anyone but a learned Catholic, who is well versed in moral theology and obeys the natural law.

The symptoms of hysteria, can be found in the television addict, which may indicate a further connection between television and hypnosis:

1. A morbid state of autosuggestion. (i.e. self-induced suggestibility)
2. An exaggerated form of egotism. Just try and tell the television-addict, that he must unplug his drug. He may bear with many things, but not this, his addiction being removed.
3. Excessive fickleness of the emotions
4. Lack of truth. (i.s. systematic lying, born of a deluded imagination.) Everyone, who is self-centered will lie about their pet vice. The alcoholic, who says I can quit any time I want to, comes to mind.
5. Sins against the virtue of temperance, such as lust, drunkenness or gluttony.

Fr. Sanford gives a simple cure for hysteria, perfect obedience to a spiritual director (i.e. a spiritual director authorized by the Church), performing works of charity and ceasing to think much about themselves.

Hypnotism can produce injury to health and/or weakened memory, reason or will power. Indeed television can produce all of these evils, the only question to be answered whether these evils result from hypnotism or some other cause.

There is another danger of television, which has not been before considered, and that is the problem of brain washing. We know that the conspiracy has used overt forms of brain washing on people, as has been reported about prisoners of war taken in conflicts after World War II, such as Korea and Vietnam. In Korea there were no escapes. Many consider that the first duty of a prisoner of war is to escape, in fact during World War II, unless the situation was hopeless, we see many examples of escape and attempted escape. It is logical to assume and simple observation affirms that covert forms of brain washing are being used on the masses in so-called free countries. If one can watch some of the advertising on television without becoming angry at the obvious violation of natural law suggested, one must be aware that one has accepted such violations. Several commercials from a large corporation come to mind. They use simple slogans, which are contrary to virtue and the natural law, such as Gotta have it; Sometimes you gotta break the rules; Have it your way; The choice of a new generation, as if there is any difference between generations.

Those, who are truly seeking salvation, see only accidental differences between generations, such as the biological effects of age, etc. In their heart, they see no difference between the teenager seeking sanctity and the octagenarian seeking sanctity. The teenager and the octagenarian, who are both seeking sanctity have more in common, than they do with those seeking sins of their own age group. There can be truly no generation gap, except in the most superficial and meaningless things. It is interesting that this corporation (Pepsico) has shown its true colors in distributing bumper stickers telling people that if they must drink and drive they should drink their non-alcoholic drink, while at the same time striking a deal to trade their soft-drink with Russia for one of the most dangerous of alcoholic drinks, vodka.

Four Reasons for the Elimination of Television

We shall now consider some of the arguments from Jerry Mander in his book, Four Reasons for the Elimination of Television, written in 1978. We will remember that this man is a member of the Sierra club and probably a member of the

New Age or similar antichristian movement. However, as we know from St. Thomas, even the pagans can have truthful ideas. (St. Thomas quotes often from the Philosopher, Aristotle, and other pagans, praising their truth and correcting their error.)

On page 194 he reports: "For the entire four hours or more per day that the average person is watching television, the repetitive process of constructing images out of dots, following scans, and vibrating with the beats of the set and the exigencies of electronic rhythm goes on. It was this repetitive, nonstop requirement to reconstruct images that are consciously usable that caused McLuhan to call television "participatory", another unfortunate choice of words. It suggest exactly the opposite of what is going on.

"I wish he had said "overpowering." ... In fact, watching television is participatory only in the way the assembly line or a hypnotist's blinking flashlight is. Eventually, the conscious mind gives up noting the process and merges with the experience. The body vibrates with the beat and the mind gives itself over, opening up to whatever imagery is offered."

Previously he had described in detail the process of manufacturing an artificial image, which television uses, because never is there a single picture, but many dots being illuminated to form a picture, which changes at a rate faster than the eye can see. A television is an extremely advanced oscilloscope, which can draw thousands of lines a second, where as an oscilloscope can be slowed down to watch the line being drawn.

On page 195 begins the section on hypnosis: "As the largest category of terms that people use to describe their television viewing relates to its hypnotic effect, I asked three prominent psychologists, famous partly for their work with hypnotism, if they could define the TV experience as hypnotic and, if so, what that meant. I described the concrete details of what goes on between viewer and television set: dark room, eyes still, body quiet, looking at light that is flickering in various ways, sound contained to narrow ranges and so on.

"Dr. Freda Morris said, "It sounds like you're giving a course outline in hypnotic trance induction."

"Morris, who is a former professor of medical psychology at UCLA and author of several books on hypnosis, told me that inducing trances was really very easy. The main method is to keep the subject "quiet, still, cut down all diversions and outside focuses," she said, and then to "create a new focus, keep their attention and at a certain point get them to follow your mind.

"There are a great variety of trance states. However, common to all is that the subject becomes inattentive to the environment, and yet be very focused on a particular thing, like a bird watching a snake.

"So you mean" I said, "that the goal of the hypnotist is to create a totally clear channel, unencumbered by anything from the outside world, so that the patient can be sort of unified with the hypnotist? She agreed with this way of putting it, adding that hypnotism has power implications which she loathes. ...

"Dr. Ernest Hilgard, who directs Stanford University's research program in hypnosis and is the author of the most widely used texts in the field, agreed that television could easily put people into a hypnotic state if they were ready for it.

"He said that, in his opinion, the condition of sitting still in a dark room, passively looking at light over a period of time, would be the prime component in the induction. "Sitting quietly, with no sensory inputs aside from the screen, no orienting outside the television is itself capable of getting people to set aside ordinary reality, allowing the substitution of some other reality that the set may offer. You can get so imaginatively involved that alternatives temporarily fade away.

...

"Morris said that since television images move more quickly than a viewer can react, one has to chase after them with the mind. This leaves no way of breaking the contact and therefore no way to comment upon the information as it passes in. It stops the critical mind. She told me about an induction technique called "confusion", which was developed by a pioneer in hypnotism, Dr. Milton Erickson. "You give a person so much to deal with that you don't give him a chance to do anything on his own. ... The hypnotist might call the patient's attention to any particular thing, it hardly matters what. Eventually, something like overload is reached, the patient shows signs of breaking and then the hypnotist comes in with some clear relief, some simple instruction, and the patient immediately goes into trance.

"The more I talked with these people, the more I realized how very obvious the process was. Every advertiser, for example, knows that before you can convince anyone of anything, you shatter their existing mental set and then restructure an awareness along lines which are useful to you. You do this with a few very simple techniques like fast-moving images, jumping among attention focuses, and switching moods. There's nothing to it.

Take a look at an advertisement and count the number of scenes in the average ad. It will be found that they average at

least ten scenes per commercial, or one every three seconds, and often more than that. They are shifting gears so fast, that you cannot keep up!

On page 200 he comments: "I do not think of myself as hypnotized while watching television. I prefer another frequently used phrase. "When I put on the television, after a while there's the feeling that images are just pouring into me and there's nothing I'm able to do about them."

...

"Since there is no way to stop the images, one merely gives over to them. More than this, one has to clear all channels of reception to allow them in more cleanly. Thinking only gets in the way. ... I noticed how difficult it was to keep mentally alert while watching television. Even so the images kept flowing into me.

"One can never allow oneself to get into such a passive state. Once thinking stops and images begin to flow in, one has surrendered one's mind to the television, and one is never permitted such surrender!"

On page 202 he reports the effect on children: "If television images have any similarity to dream imagery, then this would surely explain a growing confusion between the concrete and the imaginary.

"Television is becoming real to many people while their lives take on the quality of a dream. It would also help explain recent studies, quoted by Marie Winn and many others, that children are showing a decline in reliable memory and in the ability to learn in such a way that articulation and the written word are usable forms of expression.

"For this reason, children should watch but little television, and must be encouraged to do other more creative things, such as reading:

"I asked Peper if he agreed with Krugman that reading was a more active learning process. "Definitely", he said. "Reading produces a much higher amount of beta activity. You would expect abnormality in anyone who produces alpha while reading. The horror of television", he added, "is that the information goes in, but we don't react to it. It goes right into our memory pool and perhaps we react to it later but we don't know what we are reacting to. When you watch television you are training yourself not to react and so later on, you're doing things without knowing why you are doing them or where they came from." (page 211)

He also contends that there is a relationship between television and alcohol abuse (page 213): "Psychiatrists report that an increasing number of people these days complain that they cannot quiet their minds. One cannot will the mind to cease its fixations or ruminations. Even when it comes to sleep or sex or play, experiences that require shifting out of focused thought, the mind continues to churn.

"It is little wonder, therefore, that we have seen a sudden growth of Eastern religious disciplines, ... While many people use these ancient (Satanic) disciplines to achieve freedom from the driving of their minds, most people do not, choosing drugs instead. Alcohol is good. Valium is better. Some sleeping potions work. And there's television.

"They all succeed. Drugs provide escape while passing for experience and relaxation. Television does just as well."

It is far better to spend the time thinking on matters of God, to pray always through meditation and prayer supported by spiritual reading, than to use the Plug-In Drug, as Marie Winn calls the television.

Let us conclude this part of our consideration with a list from page 157 and 158: "If you could somehow drop all preconception of television and read this list as though people were describing some instrument you'd never seen yourself, I think the picture you would obtain is a machine that invades, controls and deadens people who view it. It is not unlike the alien operated "influencing machine" of the psychopathic fantasy.

- "1) "I feel hypnotized when I watch television."
- "2) "Television sucks my energy."
- "3) "I feel like it is brainwashing me."
- "4) "I feel like a vegetable when I'm stuck there at the tube."
- "5) "Television spaces me out."
- "6) "Television is an addiction and I'm an addict."
- "7) "My kids look like zombies when they're watching."
- "8) "TV is destroying my mind."
- "9) "My kids walk around like they're in a dream because of it."
- "10) "Television is making people stupid."
- "11) "Television is turning my mind into mush."
- "12) "If a television is on, I just can't keep my eyes off of it."
- "13) "I feel mesmerized by it."
- "14) "TV is colonizing (i.e. taking over) my brain."

“15) "How can I get my kids off it and back into life?"

“At one point I heard my son Kai say: "I don't want to watch television as much as I do but I can't help it. It makes me watch it."”

This may appear extreme, but there are people who from their actions show that they are addicted to television. If any one of these symptoms occur, there is only one cure, pull the plug and walk away from the television. If one is constantly drawn back, as if by a magnet, one must deliver the television to the trash man and be rid of his addiction. However, We believe that there can be moderate use, as there can be moderate use of alcohol, however, there are some who cannot be near a television.

Brainwashing

We have an enemy that desires our eternal damnation, Satan. And he will use every tool available to him. Modern technology has given him a number of new tools. A century and a half ago it was difficult to watch a couple commit fornication. Today you can bring it into your home 24/7 by touching a few buttons on a computer or satellite receiver. It has been said that every advance in video technology came about to serve the porn industry and make vice easier.

The main point is that movies, radio and television are excellent tools to spread the doctrines of devils. Saint Paul says: “Now the Spirit manifestly saith, that in the last times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to spirits of error, and doctrines of devils,...” [\[3\]](#)

Kennett Bawden, who named the television the satan box noticed in the late 1960's that in a seemingly innocent series in one program they would insert a Communistic message. If one watched carefully, one would notice that they were *paying their dues* to the system of Antichrist. And often the message would be awkwardly inserted. A character would have to act out of character. Later on, though, more messages were inserted and because the characters were becoming more immoral they easily carried off the *message*.

And how many messages does a person miss and take in to their mind, thus polluting it? And messages can be found not only in the last fifty years, but even back in the early days of movies. For instance, I happened to be staying in a friend's home. The Grapes of Wrath was playing on the TV. One of the main characters was talking and his message was quite clear and New Age.

“There were never lacking impious men, nor men who denied God; but were relatively few, isolated and individual, and they did not care or did not think it opportune to reveal too openly their impious mind, as the Psalmist appears to suggest when he exclaims: "The fool hath said in his heart: there is no God." The impious, the atheist, lost in the crowd, denied God, his Creator, only in the secret of his heart. Today, on the contrary, atheism has already spread through large masses of the people: well-organized, it works its way even into the common schools; it appears in theaters; in order to spread, it makes use of its own cinema films of the gramophone and the radio (and television); with its own printing presses it prints booklets in every language; it promotes special exhibitions and public parades; it has formed its own political parties and its own economic and military systems. This organized and militant atheism works untiringly by means of its agitators, with conferences and projections, with every means of propaganda, secret and open, among all classes, in every street, in every hall; it secures for this nefarious activity the moral support of its own universities, and holds fast the unwary with the mighty hands of its organizing power. At the sight of so much activity placed at the service of so wicked a cause, there comes spontaneously to Our mind and Our lips the mournful lament of Christ: "The children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.”” Caritate Christi Compulsi, Pope Pius XI

We must remember that the System of Antichrist, run by the various Secret Societies, owns and controls the media, whether it be movies, radio, television, newspapers or magazines. These are all calculated to give honor and glory to Antichrist and serve his goals, not God's!

“There is another explanation for the rapid diffusion of the Communistic ideas now seeping into every nation, great and small, advanced and backward, so that no corner of the earth is free from them. This explanation is to be found in a propaganda so truly diabolical that the world has perhaps never witnessed its like before. It is directed from one common center. It is shrewdly adapted to the varying conditions of diverse peoples. It has at its disposal great financial resources, gigantic organizations, international congresses, and countless trained workers. It makes use of pamphlets and reviews, of cinema, theatre, radio (and television), of

schools and even universities. Little by little it penetrates into all classes of the people and even reaches the better-minded groups of the community, with the result that few are aware of the poison which increasingly pervades their minds and hearts.” Divini Redemptoris, Pope Pius XI

Pope Pius XI, points out that the cause of the Great Apostasy is to be found in a propaganda so truly diabolical that the world has perhaps never witnessed its like before. “The tools used by the enemy are pamphlets and reviews, of cinema, theatre, radio (and television), of schools and even universities.” Since this system uses books, pamphlets, movies, radio and television all in the same manner, the rules for books (Canons 1384-1405) apply equally to the modern inventions of radio, movies and television. There are twelve kinds of books prohibited by the law itself, without need of any other kind of condemnation. [4] Some of these are not only prohibited by Canon Law, but by Divine Law itself.

In 1977 Marie Winn wrote a book called The Plug-In Drug about television: “Television induces a trance like state in the viewer that is the necessary precondition for brainwashing.”

Wes Moore wrote an article Television: Opiate of the Masses. [5] Let us consider this:

“An addictive mind control device ... what more could a government or profit-driven corporation ask for? But the really sad thing about television is that it turns everyone into a zombie, no one is immune. There is no higher order of super-intelligent, nefarious beings behind this. It's the product of our very human desire to alter our state of consciousness and escape the hardships of reality.

...
“We're living in a Brave New World, only it is not so brave, or even that new. In fact, it's starting to look more and more like the Dark Ages, with the preliterate zombie masses obeying the authority of the new clergy: Regis Philbin and Jerry Springer.”

Now the so-called *Dark Ages* were actually the Ages of Faith, when men and women strived to become saints. What we have today is a truly dark age, which is lighted with the light of a machine that slowly rots away our souls, while we devote most of our free time to it.

How Much Television Do People Watch?

In doing our three week program, we will find out how much television we watch. The numbers have been steadily increasing over the years.

It is hard to find historical data on how much television people watch. In 1956 Bishop Fulton Sheen reported that the average person watched thirty minutes a day. That is three and a half hours a week. Today the average person watch far more than that every day. Let us consider the following from 1992:

“Most of us (51%) say we watch between seven and 21 hours of TV a week. (People tend to under report their viewing.)” (from Would You Give Up TV For A Million Bucks? TV Guide, October 10, 1992.)

Here is another sign of addiction to television, “(People tend to underreport their viewing.)” It is like asking the problem drinker, “How many drinks have you had?” in all likelihood he or she will lie and give a smaller number of drinks than they have truly had. Only one percent claim to watch over 71 hours per week (seven hours per day); and ten percent claim to watch over 35 hours per week (five hours per day). We can say with certainty, that unless this amount of television is necessary for their employment, they are probably sinning, for their excess curiosity and/or over indulgence in recreation.

Today the average person watches 34 hours per week, which is almost five hours a day. [\[6\]](#) Consider this is almost a full time 40 hour a week job. We sleep 56 hours per week, then work 45 if you add in the commute, then next we spend 34 hours a week with the Satan box. This leaves us only 33 hours a week left for everything else, such as eating, reading, praying, etc. We are spending twenty percent of our time in front of the satan box. How many of us make a Holy Hour once a week, when we should be spending an hour in prayer every day?

Let us consider this from the Cure of Ars, Saint John Vianney: “But if you, dear children, had to pass three or four hours praying in a church, as you pass them at a dance or in a cabaret, how heavily the time would press upon you!” [\[7\]](#) Ask the average person to make a Holy Hour once a week and they grumble, but will happily spend more than a day each week enthroned in front of the satan box!

Television Is Addictive

We must first define what an addiction is. An addiction is a habit of sin, which becomes all-consuming and controlling of our life. As such we devote a notable and inordinate amount of time to our addiction. Thus not only alcohol and drugs can be addictive, but also gambling, shopping and many other past times. Addictions tend to be destructive, spiritually, mentally and physically. The spiritual destruction of an addiction is obviously the worst, for addictions are a habit of sin, usually venial, that leads one to weaken and commit mortal sin in some area of their life.

Television and Health Reports:

“Millions of Americans are so hooked on television that they fit the criteria for substance abuse as defined in the official psychiatric manual, according to Rutgers University psychologist and TV-Free America board member Robert Kubey. Heavy TV viewers exhibit five dependency symptoms--two more than necessary to arrive at a clinical diagnosis of substance abuse. These include: 1) using TV as a sedative; 2) indiscriminate viewing; 3) feeling loss of control while viewing; 4) feeling angry with oneself for watching too much; 5) inability to stop watching; and 6) feeling miserable when kept from watching.”

And let us consider this from Television Addiction – A Growing Problem:

“It is noted that the average person spends about three hours a day sitting in front of the TV set, which is half of their leisure time. And, it is known that heavy viewers report watching eight hours a day. The question is, “Are these people addicted to the television?”

“First, let’s define an addiction. It is said that addiction is characterized by spending an unusually large amount of time using a substance that is addictive; finding oneself using it more often than intended; thinking about reducing the use, and are making repeated unsuccessful attempts to reduce it; giving up social activities to use the substance, and reporting withdrawal symptoms when one does achieve stopping the use.

“Television can teach and amuse, and it does provide needed distraction and escape. Yet, the difficulty arises when one strongly senses the need to stop viewing as much, and yet find they are unable to reduce viewing.” [8]

Note that one definition of an addiction is that we devote a lot of time to it. Let us consider the compulsive gambler. He spends a lot of time at the casino or the race track. And it takes time for an alcoholic to get drunk. We have already seen that the average person spends twenty percent of their time with television, which is excessive. And so on this basis television is addictive.

The Plug-In Drug

In 1977 Marie Winn wrote a book called The Plug-In Drug about television: “And yet the essence of any serious addiction is a pursuit of pleasure.”

More recently Wes Moore wrote an article Television: Opiate of the Masses. [9] Let us consider some excerpts from this article.

“That television you watch every day, your secret best friend, is an addictive opiate, and not only that, it's one of the most potent mind-control devices ever produced. And I'm not just basing this on intuition. I have the neurological evidence to prove it.

...

“Of course, not all addictions are chemical. Any behavior that leads to a pleasurable experience will be repeated, especially that behavior requires little work. Psychologists call this pattern “positive enforcement”. This is what we mean, technically speaking, by addiction. In this sense, television certainly fits into the category of an addictive agent.

...

“First of all, when you're watching television the higher brain regions (like the midbrain and the neo-cortex) are shut down, and most activity shifts to the lower brain regions (like the limbic system.) The neurological processes that take place in these regions cannot be accurately be called “cognitive.” ... Studies have proven that, in the long run, too much activity in the lower brain leads to atrophy in the higher brain regions.”

Let us consider this from a spiritual standpoint. This sounds like we are given ourselves over to our lower nature, which is one of the three enemies we must fight. We must fight the world, the flesh and the devil. And how can we fight the flesh, when we are shutting down that section of our brain that carries on this important fight?

“Televison is like a double edged sword: not only does it cause the endocrine system to release the body's natural opiates (endorphins), but it also concentrates neurological activity in the lower brain regions where we are motivated by nothing but the pursuit of pleasure. Television produces highly functional, mobile “bio-survival robots.””

Some else called these people *sheeple*. When we watch television habitually we make ourselves ready to be led like sheep to the slaughter.

The Evil of Pleasure Seeking

We have seen that watching television causes a release of endorphins, which is a cause of pleasure. And yet we are not created for pleasure, but for happiness. Happiness is a state of being, when our will is in total conformity with the will of Almighty God. Pleasure is a by product of actions, which God grants us. Pleasure is not an end, but merely a byproduct that may or may not occur. Happiness is our true end and can only be found in spiritual things, not material.

Saint Paul warned Timothy (II Tim 3:4) that the people of our time would be: “lovers of pleasure more than of God.” And indeed this can be seen to be true in the multiplication of addictions. St. Louis de Montfort says: [\[10\]](#) “Worldlings, on the contrary, rouse one another to persist in their unscrupulous depravity. "Enjoy life, peace, and pleasure," they shout, "Enjoy life, peace and pleasure. Let us eat, let us drink, let us sing, let us dance, let us play. God is good, He did not make us to damn us; God does not forbid us to enjoy ourselves; we shall not be damned for that; away with scruples; we shall not die." And so they continue.”

The evil of pleasure seeking can be seen by the condemnation of two propositions. “Eating and drinking even to satiety for pleasure only, are not sinful, provided this does not stand in the way of health, since any natural appetite can licitly enjoy its own actions.” Condemned by Pope Innocent XI (DZ 1158). In other words to eat purely for pleasure is sinful. We should eat to live, not live to eat. If we live to eat, even though it doesn't injure our health, we still are sinfully seeking pleasure.

Pope Innocent XI also condemned the proposition (DZ 1159): “The act of marriage exercised for pleasure only is entirely free of all fault and venial defect.” The act of marriage is designed for several purposes,. The primary purposes is the procreation of children. A secondary end is the allaying of concupiscence. Also it is an expression of mutual love. One of these ends must be remotely in mind, when pursuing the act of marriage.

Father Adolphe Tanquerey gives some good advice: [\[11\]](#) “If it be a question of some *pleasure*-passion one must strive to forget the object of the passion. In order to accomplish this: 1) one must apply the mind and the imagination to any wholesome activity apt to divert attention from the object of passion; one must seek to engage all the powers of the mind on some absorbing object of study, on the solution of some question or problem, or find distraction in play, social intercourse, conversation, walks, etc.... 2) Then, when calm ensues one should have recourse to such moral considerations as may strengthen the will against the allurements of pleasure: considerations of the *natural* order, such as the untoward consequences,

for the present and the future, with which a dangerous attachment, a too sentimental friendship may be fraught; but above all one should appeal to the *supernatural* considerations, for instance, that it is impossible to advance in the way of perfection so long as we cling to such attachments., that these are but chains we forge for ourselves, that we thereby risk our salvation, that through our fault scandal may be given, etc.”

Let us apply Father Tanquerey's advice to television. Father Schouppe says: “Alas! It is not to the theater that we go to prepare for death!” [\[12\]](#) If one studies the matter well, one must conclude that there are no habitual television viewers in heaven and extremely few in Purgatory. No, most habitual television viewers go straight to hell, for they have weakened their will and in their semi-hypnotic state consented to numerous mortal sins.

And let us consider this well, television is an obstacle to spiritual advancement much more so than any other worldly attachment. Can one see a television in Saint John Vianney's parlor or Saint Vincent Ferrer's? Instead they would rail against it as the satan box, which destroys souls possibly more so than dancing, which Saint John Vianney was vehemently opposed to.

Let us return to Father Tanquerey: “Lastly, *positive acts directly opposed* to the harrassing passion must be elicited.” Television leads to worldliness and is a form of worldliness. Meditate on this point. If you do not spend a notable amount of time in meditation, then it is time to get out the shot gun and get rid of the television, for it is keeping you from true prayer!

A Code For Catholic Television Viewers

From Parishioner's Handbook

“It is a most pressing need that the conscience of Catholics, with regard to television, should be formed by the sound principles of the Christian Religion.” Pope Pius XII (On September 8, 1957 Pope Pius XII issued the now celebrated Encyclical Letter MIRANDA PRORSUS in which he offered the wisest counsel concerning the uses of Television.)

(The Faithful are encouraged to read this great Letter. Available at pamphlet racks and book stores.)

(On February 14, 1958 Pope Pius XII proclaimed St. Clare of Assisi Heavenly Patroness of Television. This great Saint lay gravely ill on Christmas Eve, 1252. Unable to attend Mass she was granted by God the miraculous vision of Mass together with the sound of prayers and music in the Basilica of St. Francis some distance away. For this and other reasons Our Holy Father, granted the often-repeated request made over a period of years by the Faithful, especially by those within the Television industry, and placed this great medium under the Patronage of St. Clare.)

Catholics, in the use of the Television, should -

1. Make thoughtful selection, and profitable use of programs, avoiding those which, whole or in part, might be harmful to Catholic faith or morals, and not accept programs merely on the basis of popularity polls and ratings.
2. Consult the Legion of Decency classification of movies shown on television, as well as reviews and appraisals of other programs, which are published, in Catholic newspapers and periodicals. *Unfortunately the Legion of Decency is no longer available. Do not use secular ratings as they are not reliable.*
3. Use television with due moderation so that viewing practices will not lead to hasty meals, neglect of duty, family conversation, good reading, or discourtesy to guests who may wish neither to view nor to listen.
4. Avoid that late-hour viewing which might lead to damage to health, neglect of night prayers or to morning lateness or unpreparedness for Church, work or school.
5. Control viewing practices so that they will not interfere with attendance at devotions in the Parish church or with regular Confession.
6. Observe moderation in taking or serving intoxicants during viewing, and be mindful of the laws of the Church regarding fast and abstinence.
7. View regularly and attentively Catholic programs which are offered to lead men to perfection of soul, and for the promotion of God's glory furthermore, to encourage others, including non-Catholics, to do likewise. *These programs are no longer available.*
8. Write and send courteous and informative letters of disapproval to both Sponsor and Channel Director when offensive topics, costumes, dances, dialogue, or humor are presented and send letters of appreciation when a program of unusual excellence, by Catholic standards, is presented. Be sure to sign your name, unsigned letters are never recognized.
9. Supervise the viewing practices of the young, and offer correction to statements, etc., when the honor of God and the Church, and the proper moral and mental formation of the children require such correction.
10. See that television (whether with picture or sound only) does not cause children to neglect their religious duties, studies, fresh air, sunshine, exercise, rest, or wholesome companionship, and, finally, that children do not impose their choice of programs against the wishes of their elders.

Brief Comments

Above We have commented in *italics*. All need to be extremely careful in regard to television.

The Proper Use of Television

Bishop Hedley says:

“Even when the newspaper is free from objection, it is easy to lose a good deal of time over it. It may be necessary and convenient to know what is going on in the world. But these can be no need of our observing all the rumours, all the guesses and gossip, all the petty incidents, all the innumerable paragraphs in which the solid news appears half-drowned, like the houses and hedges when the floods are out. This is idle and is absolutely bad for brain and character. There is a kind of attraction towards petty and desultory reading of this kind which is sure to leave its mark on the present generation. The newspapers present not only news, but ideas, reflections, views, inferences and conclusions of every kind.

“... As the reader takes in all this prepared digested matter he is deluded with the notion that he is thinking and exercising his mind. He is doing nothing of the kind. He is putting on another man's clothes, and fitting himself out with another man's ideas. To do this habitually is to live the life of the child; one is amused and occupied, and one is enabled to talk second-hand talk; but that is all. Men were better men, if they thought at all, in the days when there was less to read. ... Immoderate newspaper reading leads, therefore to much loss of time, and does no good, either to the mind or the heart.

“Most Rev. Dr. Hedley, Bishop of Newport, England, 1881.”

In the book Matt Talbot and His Times, the author, Mary Purcell, comments, "Dr. Hedley lived long before the advent of radio and television." Matt Talbot in his spiritual reading had this particular passage marked. Matt Talbot is probably the most notable person to overcome alcoholism through prayer and penance, since the proliferation of whisky. What would Bishop Hedley write today about television and the immoderate use of it, which almost everyone indulges in?

The regulation of television is absolutely essential to salvation. For some, this will mean total abstinence, just as Matt Talbot abstained from alcohol for a large part of his life after indulging in his earlier years.

Secular sources, who consider the problem of television have come up with some rather strict rules. One person advises placing the television in the least desirable room in the house to reduce its attractiveness. Others recommend that there be only one television in the home and no televisions in bed rooms.

The television should be in a cabinet with the doors shut 164 to 168 hours each week. [\[13\]](#) It should not be the focal point of the room. Instead it should take some work to set up to watch television. Consider two centuries ago. How much effort would it be to go to a play? It should take some effort to go and watch television. Television must be a sideline in our life, not a central portion of it. Programs must be chosen with great care. To simply sit there and watch, because you have *nothing better to do* is not the reasoning of a Christian. And television should come after daily Rosary, an hour a day in spiritual reading, meditation and/or contemplation, and other pious practices. We need to learn self-discipline in regard to the television.

Television should be given up in Advent and Lent and on all of the fast days of the Church, such as the Ember Days and certain vigils. In the Ages of Faith the Church forbade plays and other amusements during these holy times. It would be good to give it up at other times, such as on Fridays in honor of the Passion or Saturdays in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

But Television Is Useful and Necessary

Television is a great invention and has a potential for good uses. It is possible with research that some of the damaging effects of television could be eliminated, leaving only its potential for good. So let us look at the positive of television.

Weather

In tornado alley, the television is the best source of information, during a bad storm. Local stations are good about breaking in and giving warnings and going to full time coverage of the more severe storms. Between their spreading of official warnings and the radar one can get a good idea of the danger they are in and take appropriate action. Ever since the first tornado warning was given out in the 1950's, saving a number of people, television has been good in this area. This is one area where radio comes second, being battery powered. The internet has some resources that are also helpful in this type of situation, but not as good as television. We can say that severe weather reporting is the highest and best use of television.

News

“If it bleeds, it leads” is the motto of news. What is the true purpose of news? News should provide us with the information we need to discharge our responsibilities in life. Now, knowing about a sensational murder case is not only not necessary, but often a sin of gossip and curiosity. And so this type of news is a waste of time.

And look at the national news. In the United States, the President is good for three to five minutes a night. When Obama was elected several nights were devoted to a discussion of the dog he was going to get his kids, while in the White House. Hardly necessary for us to know. And on a slow news day, one can see something as inane as President's Dog Does Duty on White House Lawn. The only time the President got pushed aside was when Vice President Dick Cheney had his *friendly fire incident* in a hunting accident, when he accidentally shot someone. Because we must vote, there are things we need to know about our politicians, but the network news is notoriously bad at supplying this information. Since the invention of the internet far more useful information can be found there and quicker than devoting a half an hour every night to the national news.

And there is another drawback to news. The stories are usually incomplete. In the late 1990's I heard a piece of information, I thought would be useful, so I wrote it down. Over the next two years I made other notes. Someone asked my opinion on these things, so I went through my notes and organized them. It had taken me two years to get a fairly good picture. Now, if I wish to update this information, I can do it in a few minutes on the internet. I have noticed this incompleteness in newspapers as well. Stop and think, are there any questions left unanswered?

Today there are far better sources of information than television.

Improvement Programming

There are several times of improvement programs. There are cooking shows and do it yourself shows for household projects. Used in moderation, these may provide useful information. The various medical and psychological shows, however should be avoided. One popular medical show encourages the mortal sin of using condoms. Other shows promote acceptance of sinful life styles.

Religious Programming

Saint Clare was named patron saint of television, because she miraculously was able to assist at Mass by seeing it from a distance. If this were possible today, this would be a good use of television, providing Mass for those unable to assist at it. However, this is not available. All such programming promotes the spirit of Vatican II, which is the spirit of Antichrist. [\[14\]](#)

Curiosity Is a Sin

The Baltimore Catechism says: “See, then, what caused Eve's sin. She went into the dangerous occasion, and was admiring the forbidden fruit when the tempter came. She listened to him, yielded to his wicked suggestions, and sinned.” Ever since Eve looked at the apple and listened to the serpent, we have been in trouble. Original sin came from a sin of curiosity, which was committed by Eve and then Adam.

Our mind is like to a computer, which is constantly receiving information from our five senses. It is also processing this information for use later on, as well as storing it. If it receives bad information, then it can produce a bad output, that is sin. Consider, a boy who sees a naked young woman. Will he ever be able to forget that image, which has been stored in his mind? Might this image return to his mind a half a century later, when he is on his death bed and cause his damnation? “The unhappy soul will then say: Had I mortified myself by not looking at such an object; ... if I had read a spiritual book every day;” [\[15\]](#) How many of us are taking in information that is worthless? How many of us are taking in information that is down right perverse, and excusing it as mere *entertainment*? There is no excuse for sin. We have an intellect and will and it is our duty to keep our intellect pure.

Sacred Scripture says:

“In unnecessary matters be not over curious, and in many of His works thou shalt not be inquisitive.” [\[16\]](#)

“And many of them who had followed curious arts brought together their books and burnt them before all. And, counting the price of them, they found the money to be fifty thousand pieces of silver.” [\[17\]](#)

At current silver prices, this would be a million dollars worth of bad books that were burnt.

When we think of curiosity, we have been told that it is a good thing to be encouraged, not a sin to be avoided. Saint Thomas Aquinas distinguishes between the virtue of studiousness and the vice of curiosity in his *Summa Theologica*.

Father Tanquerey says: “Curiosity is a disease of the mind, which is one of the causes of religious ignorance, for it leads us to seek too eagerly the knowledge of things that delight us rather than of things that are profitable to us, and thus to lose precious time.” [\[18\]](#)

Let us look at a book, [The Devil](#):

“Now, dear readers, we must conclude. The misfortune of most men is that they know not how to conclude. They hear a discourse, they read a book, **and go to their business, or their pleasures without having asked themselves: “What is the result of this in relation to my personal conduct?”** If you are reading this out of mere curiosity, then this paper is worthless to you, you must ask yourself: What is the warning that Providence now gives me?” [\[19\]](#)

And this is how we should seek information. We should seek it for our good, spiritual and material. Pope Pius XI says: “Similarly the sustained effort to understand supernatural things excites men to live more perfectly.” This is why we are recommending an hour a day in spiritual pursuits in addition to our other devotions. We need this concentrated time in order to live more perfectly.

Henry Edward Cardinal Manning warns:

“Curiosity and recklessness fascinate thousands to their fall. The want or the loss of the gift of science, which as a sensitive instinct turns away from error as you would turn away from evil, causes even good minds to go astray. Sometimes they lose the delicate perception of what is true and the delicate horror of what is false. Take care, then, of what books you read, of what friends you make, of what conversations you indulge in, of everything that can cloud the light and discernment of faith that is within you.” [\[20\]](#)

We should add that what we take in by way of radio, television and the internet has a similar danger.

Saint Bernard says:

“Some there are who desire knowledge merely for the sake of knowing, and this is shameful curiosity ... and some there are who desire knowledge that they may put their knowledge up for sale for gain or for

honors, and this is disgraceful trafficking: but some there are who desire knowledge that they may edify others, and this is charity: and finally, there are some who desire knowledge that they may thereby be edified themselves, and this is prudence.”

And Saint Augustine says: “We are forbidden to be curious: and this is a great gift that temperance bestows.” We must be studiousness seeking knowledge in order to better ourselves, spiritually and material and to serve our neighbor in his needs and wants.

Let us close with this thought from Blessed Anna-Maria Taigi:

“God will send two punishments: one will be in the form of wars, revolutions and other evils; it shall originate on earth. The other will be sent from Heaven. There shall come over the whole earth an intense darkness lasting three days and three nights. Nothing can be seen, and the air will be laden with pestilence which will claim mainly, but not only, the enemies of religion. It will be impossible to use any man-made lighting during this darkness, except blessed candles. He, who out of curiosity, opens his window to look out, or leaves his home, will fall dead on the spot. During these three days, people should remain in their homes, pray the Rosary and beg God for mercy.”

During the Three Days of Darkness, which comes at the end of the current period of Catholic Church history, the Great Apostasy, anyone who looks outside will have this curiosity punished by death. [\[21\]](#) We are living in the Age of Curiosity, and this curiosity has led to enumerable sins.

Let us consider this warning from the Blessed Virgin Mary at Quito Ecuador, speaking of our times:

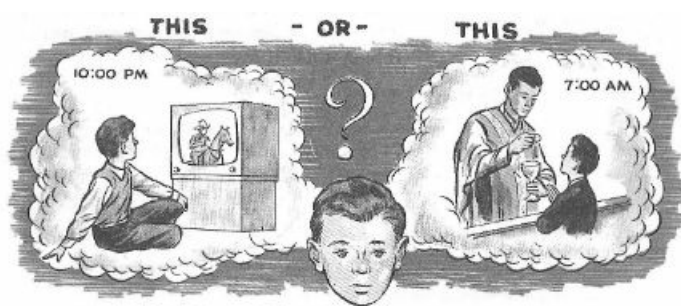
“The third meaning of the lamp's going out is that those times the air will be filled with the spirit of impurity which like a deluge of filth will flood the streets, squares and public places. The licentiousness will be such there will be no more virgin souls in the world.”

Virginity is more than bodily virginity. It requires also virginity of the heart and soul. With the introduction of television this prophecy has been literally fulfilled. Consider the filth currently being broadcast through the air waves by radio, television and satellites. The air is literally filled with impurity. With a little receiver we can tap into the most vile things easily. And today, there are no virgin souls. All have been exposed to evils they should not have been and at the most tender of ages.

“Contemplation,” says St. Peter of Alcantara, “cannot endure curiosity, whether of the senses or of the mind. . . . All this takes up time, disturbs the senses, disquiets and dissipates the soul, and scatters it in all directions.” And all reasonable people are created for contemplation. By reasonable people we mean all who have the use of reason. Therefore the only ones not created for contemplation are infants, who are not yet ready for contemplation, and the perpetually insane. Once we reach the age of reason we begin our journey towards contemplation, which is our goal in life. We can see that curiosity keeps us from our goal of reaching divine contemplation.

Watching Television Can Be a Sin

Watching television can be a sin. It should be obvious that to watch immoral television is a sin, but the quantity of television watched can also be sinful. In and of itself to watch habitually three or more hours a day is a venially sinful habit of waste of time. Watching a three hour movie every six months would not be a sin, but to do this day in and day out is certainly sinful.



Also there are certain other habits in regard to television viewing that are sinful. And the first of these is to go to bed with television. Our last thought before going to sleep should be a pious thought and television rarely produces such thoughts. We should close the day with our night prayers and preparation of the next day's meditation not with the TV.

Also late night viewing can be a sin against charity, for the radio and television both disturb the peace and quiet that should reign in a home after bed time until after morning prayers.

Television viewing can become a mortal sin, when it leads to a major neglect of our responsibilities to Almighty God, our neighbor especially our family and our self.

There is one sin in regard to radio, television and even texting that must be addressed. This is the mortal sin of blasphemy, which is so prevalent in the world today. We ask God's forgiveness in advance for using the following example from the world of texting and the internet. OMG is used to express astonishment and according to the internet it does not mean Oh My Goodness. It is an act of blasphemy. You may say, but I mean Oh My Goodness, when I use it. Saint Paul says: "But prove all things; hold fast that which is good. From all appearance of evil refrain yourselves." [22] We cannot use anything with a *double meaning* like this. To use something with a double meaning like this is an act of scandal as it may lead others into sin because they believe it means something else from what we intend.

And blasphemy can be found in the world of television. In fact using the above phrase was the trait of a co-star on a series from thirty years ago. [23] He would say this about once an episode. And thus that series must be condemned as mortally sinful for the blasphemy. It is not sufficient to adopt the habit of making an act of reparation every time a blasphemy is heard. That is fine in the world, where we cannot avoid contact with mortal sinners, but for *entertainment* we must be stricter. If we do hear a blasphemy in a news report or elsewhere, we should make an act of reparation. If we find it in our *entertainment* it is time to flip the television off. To fail to do so is to cooperate in the sin. This cooperation is more evil than watching a pornographic movie! And this is an area where many have relaxed. They have come to accept blasphemy as simply something we must live with. And this is a danger with television. By habitually viewing evil we come to accept it.

Many other things can be said on the sinfulness of television, but this would make this book larger than it needs to be. We have discussed the promotion of divorce and homosexuality. All theologians agree that every sin against the sixth and ninth commandments is mortal. And this includes all *off color* jokes and stories or any discussion of any immoral act, no matter how obliquely it is discussed. Many Moral Theology books go into Latin when they must discuss the various sins a priest may hear in Confession to show how serious this matter is. [24] Many televisions cross the line into immorality in this manner. Remember if it is a sin to do it, it is a sin to talk about it or even think about it. Therefore it is a sin to watch anything which discusses it.



Moral Television

It is nearly impossible to go through the television show by show and condemn those that are immoral. There is a story told of a mother in the early 1970's, who wanted to check movies before she allowed her children to go. So she would go to the movie and watch it first. After a month or two she realized that she was wasting her time, because she hadn't found a decent movie yet. The same can be said of much that is on television.

And so we have gone back over the television we recall watching before we gave it up entirely and made a list of those series that never crossed the line into immorality. The list is in the empty box above. Actually that is an exaggeration, but the list is rather short. Antiques Roadshow has never crossed the line in the episodes I watched. Also Extreme Homes never crossed the line. As I recall This Old House didn't.

Although I was an avid viewer of Jeopardy it did cross the line by spreading false propaganda. True, I would sit there and correct them, but one cannot recommend a program that habitually teaches error. Our minds are created for truth and we should only allow the truth to enter our minds.

And many programs promote the false ideals of the world today. Let us look at the homosexual agenda, which may soon lead to nationwide legitimization of homosexual unions as *marriages*. Just as the Supreme Court legalized murder of the unborn, they may soon force homosexuality upon us. This Supreme Court consists today of six nominal Catholics, who are not doing their duty to promote morals as required by the Natural Law. And this softening in regard to homosexuality has come from all forms of television. Take a look at an innocent sounding program, House Hunters. How many *couples* are homosexuals seeking a new home in which to commit sin? In fact many other couples are what the Census Bureau calls POSLQs, that is persons of the opposite sex sharing living quarters. As Catholics we call it *living in sin*. Just as we cannot do it, we should not participate in it in any way, even on television. In fact, to watch such a program is certainly sinful. Is it possibly a mortal sin of cooperation in the sin of another? We recall being sickened by a cooking competition series. One of the participants bragged about how proud her *partner* of the same sex would be at her progress in learning to cook. We did not watch that one ever again. Although those episodes which do not promote some form of immorality are acceptable, we should consider refraining from those as well. We need to *vote with our feet* and avoid promoting such programs.

Saint Paul says: "But prove all things; hold fast that which is good. **From all appearance of evil refrain yourselves.**" [25] By watching an immoral program we are giving scandal and a bad example.

We have seen how evil can be found in seemingly innocent places. Consider a sporting event. How many times have the announcers gotten off into immorality, because the action on the field was boring and they just started talking? And let us not forget immodesty in dress, which is rampant in the world today. We may not be able to avoid it on the street, but we must not invite it into our living room.

Take a look at the Ten Commandments. If it is a sin to do it, it is likewise a sin to watch it on television. We must be very careful, because it is so easy to cross the line into sinfulness and the habitual television viewer will eventually cross the line.

The Legion of Decency condemned Miracle on 34th Street - condemned because of its sympathies toward a divorced mother, played by Maureen O'Hara. [26] Any series, which portrays a divorced person should be avoided, for this is promoting divorce. Canon 1399, which is reproduced below, forbids anything immoral, including anything that promotes divorce.

Much more could be written, but it is time that we made wise choices in regard to television and were critical of everything. And the choice to leave the television off must always be an option. And we should not admit anything into our homes that we would not allow a child to watch, unless it is absolutely necessary. The news is permitted, provided it does not cross the line and there is some necessity of watching it.

Some shows must be condemned in part, because they indulge in gossip and detraction. Even the news does this, so we must be careful here. We have been taught that we have a right to know everything, and this is simply not true. Detraction is the unjust revelation of the sins of another. Let us take the revelation of President Clinton's violations of the eighth commandment, which served to be the topic on the news for some months. One result was that a whole generation was taught new ways to violate the eighth commandment!

And we must examine our conscience carefully. Have I watched television programs or movies that are immoral? The answer is most likely that I have. I must repent of my sin and go now and sin no more. This is the choice. And a good penance would be to abstain from television for a notable amount of time. We must also ask ourselves if television has caused us to lower our standards? As programs got worse are there programs that I would not watch when they first came out, but now watch in reruns?

The Satan Box

Tertullian reports:

“You, have nothing to do with a sacred place which is tenated by such multitudes of diabolic spirits.”

“That immodesty of gesture and attire which so specially and peculiarly characterizes the stage are consecrated to them—the one deity wanton by her sex, the other by his drapery; while its services of voice, and song, and lute, and pipie, belong to Apollos, and Muses, and Minervas, and Mercuries.”

“Nay, as regards the arts, we ought to have gone further back, and barred all further argument by the position that the demons, predetermined in their own interests from the first, among other evils of idolatry, the pollutions of the public shows, with the object of drawing man away from his Lord and binding him to their own service, carried out their purpose by bestowing on him the artistic gifts which the shows require.”

In De Spectaculis Tertullian devotes a whole chapter to satanic influence and the theater. More recently an organization has released a DVD, Hollywood Unmasked, which reports the satanic influence upon Hollywood, movies and television. [27] This DVD has numerous quotes from actors about how they have let themselves be influenced by Satan. Basically they step out of the way and let satan possess them to improve their acting ability. Obviously such a practice cannot be permitted or cooperated in in any manner whatsoever.

“There are television sets in every home, every restaurant, every hotel room, and every shopping mall— now they're even small enough to carry in your pocket like electronic rosaries. It is an unquestioned part of everyday life. Kneeling before the cathode-ray god, with our TV Guide concordance in hand, we maintain the illusion of choice by flipping channels (chapters and verses).” [28] This was written in 1992 by the founder of the Church of Satan, Anton LaVey. He also wrote The Satanic Bible, as a guide book for ushering in a new Age of Satan.

LaVey continues: “... The birth of TV was a magical event foreshadowing its satanic significance. The first commercial broadcast was aired on Walpurgisnacht, April 30th, 1939, at the New York World's Fair. Since then, TV's infiltration has been so gradual, so complete that no one even noticed. People don't need to go to church any more; they get their morality plays on television.” [29]

Let us consider this last point. Let us look at how morals have been degraded on television since its introduction after World War II. There have been several shifts towards immorality in the past two thirds of a century. The 1960's saw the introduction of the continued story of the sins of Peyton Place. This assisted in lowering morals and introduced many to the habit of watching people live in a continual state of mortal sin. And then the late 1970's saw Roots and a host of mini-series, which also depicted many sins and introduced people to many things we should not know, such as gang rape in jails, for instance. The 1980's saw the advent of cable and satellite television, which allowed people to bring in even worse things, since there were some restrictions on broadcast television.

Anton LaVey predicted: “We can use TV as a potent propaganda machine. The stage is set for the infusion of true satanic philosophy and potent (emotionally inspiring) music to accompany the inverted crosses and pentagrams.” [30] And let us look at 2011. How many prominent people are living a life of sin? promote the homosexual agenda? Indeed television has softened the thinking of everyone who watches it regularly. It truly can be called the satan box.

Prayer and Television

It should be obvious that radio and television must be turned off during prayer time, but some have forgotten even that. Many have forgotten the requirements for true prayer.

Prayer must be attentive, persevering, reverential, humble, trustful and offered up for things necessary or useful to salvation. Voluntary distraction in prayer is sinful because irreverent. A set form of words is not prayer at all if we have not external attention, that is, if we are engaged in doing what is absolutely incompatible with internal attention of even the most tenuous kind." Moral and Pastoral Theology, Davis, Volume II, pages 7 and 8.

Since attention is opposed to distraction, external attention is that which excludes distractions, viz. all those external acts which occupy a person to such extent that he is no longer able to attend to the meaning of his prayer. Thus, for instance, external attention would be lacking if during prayer a man reads, or paints, or watches television, or does some other work which requires keen attention; on the other hand, external attention is present if he prays while he walks or performs some light work which does not require much attention. (Such as sweeping or scrubbing the floor, weeding the garden, digging a ditch, etc.) Such external attention well deserves to be called attention since a person is thus applying himself to prevent his prayer being disturbed by external occupations. (such as watching television) For just as a man who takes care that no wild animals wander into his flower garden is said to be attending his garden, so in the same way a man who turns aside from external occupations is attending to his prayer. Moral Theology, Prummer, page 171.

A voluntary distraction is sinful, because it is irreverent, that is it is willfully placing an obstacle between us and God. An involuntary distraction is not irreverent, because it is not willed, in fact one can pray even if distracted involuntarily the whole time. Now is the leaving of the television on during prayer and spiritual reading a sinful distraction?

Television and the Divine Office

Question: In the series of articles on the Divine Office, which appeared some months ago in the pages of The Homiletic and Pastoral Review, the explanation of the attention required for the recitation of the Office led me to wonder a bit. How about those who attempt to recite the work of God (Divine Office) in front of a television set, watching a ball game, or while listening to the radio? If one would do this, would he satisfy his obligation, or would he fail in his duty

(signed) FRATER

Answer: Basically, the answer to Frater's question must be found in the rule set down in that very article.

"The minimum requirement for validly satisfying the precept is that there be external attention. This means that the cleric is not performing any other action which is incompatible with internal attention. In this respect, much depends upon how serious an impediment the other action is."

It seems quite clear that one could fail to satisfy the obligation of the canonical hours (or other prayer) while watching a television program, even intermittently, because he would fail to give the required attention to the Divine Office. ...

However, our consideration of this matter should not be limited to the valid fulfillment of the obligation. One who is satisfied merely with this is falling short of what is expected of him and of what is his duty. Speaking of the priest and the Divine Office, our Holy Father, Pope Pius XII, sets forth the attitude that every cleric should have toward the recitation of the canonical hours.

"The Divine Office is a most efficacious means of sanctification. Certainly it is not a mere recitation of formularies or of artistically executed chants; it is not just a question of respect for certain norms, called rubrics, or for external ceremonies of worship; it is above all a matter of elevating the mind and heart to God, in unison with the blessed spirits, who eternally sing praises to God. Therefore, the canonical hours should be recited worthily, attentively, and with devotion, as we are reminded at the beginning of the Office."

We should remember that the will of God is our sanctification. And does television sanctify us?

Having thus described the recitation of the canonical hours, our Holy Father addresses to all priests an admonition that cannot be put into practice who seeks or who willfully admits distracting influences during his recitation of the Divine Office. The Supreme Pontiff exhorts:

“Meditate with care and attention on these fertile truths which the Holy Ghost has disclosed to us in the Sacred Scriptures, and upon which the writings of the Fathers and Doctors are commentary explanations. As your lips repeat the words dictated by the Holy Ghost, try not to lose anything of this great treasure, and, that your souls may be responsive to the grace of God, put away from your minds with all effort and zeal whatever might distract you, and recollect your thoughts, that you may thus more easily and with greater fruit attend to the contemplation of the eternal truths.” Homiletic and Pastoral Review, pages 833, 834, volume 54, June, 1954.

What is said here of the Divine Office applies to spiritual reading, meditation, private prayer, the Rosary, etc. It is impossible to pray properly in front of a television that is on, even if the sound be off. The television is a voluntary distraction. Before beginning spiritual reading or prayer of any sort the television must be turned off completely.

St. Thomas states (II-II, Q83, A13): “Purposely to allow one's mind to wander in prayer is sinful and hinders the prayer from having fruit. It is against this that Augustine says in his Rule: "When you pray God with psalms and hymns, let your mind attend to that which your lips pronounce." But to wander in mind unintentionally does not deprive prayer of its fruit.”

What Is More Important?

In analyzing how we spend our time, let us ask several questions.

First how much time do we spend with Almighty God? We can count all of the time devoted to prayer, meditation, contemplation and spiritual reading.

Next add up the amount of time we spend with television. And so what is more important, God or the television? Most of us must answer that television is four to ten times more important to us than Almighty God, and this must change if we hope to save our souls.

And we can also do this in other areas of our life. For instance, how much does a mother or father spend with their spouse and with their children?

Studies report that if we made a list of the time we use, sleep would come first, then work and then television. Whereas we spend a whole day or more with television each week, many can't be bothered to spend more than a few minutes with the family. We must conclude, if we are honest, that television takes far too much of our time. It's use must be greatly curtailed, if not eliminated.

Should I Give Up Television Entirely?

If you balk at even thinking of giving up television entirely, then you probably should give it up, at least for a notable amount of time. Television is incompatible with the spirit of fasting of penitential seasons, such as Advent and Lent, so going without television for a complete Lent, including Sundays, is advisable for all who want to go to heaven.

Let us consider the 1957 Franciscan Third Order Rule:

“They shall steadfastly avoid dances, theatrical performances, films and television shows that tend to be offensive to good morals, and also all forms of dissipation. Concerning dances in general, tertiaries shall observe exactly the regulations laid down by the Church in their various localities, so that they may never be the cause of scandal. To put the spirit of penance into practice better and to foster recollection, it is to be recommended that they abstain altogether from dances, theatrical performances, films and television shows.”

To give up television is certainly being recommended here. Let us ask the opposite question: “Is it a sin to give up television?” The answer would be no, it is not a sin.

Let us consider Pope Pius XII's to Instruction to Lenten Preacher's given in 1944, which is of great value to our consideration here, and upon which We shall comment:

“A fact which always repeats itself in the history of the church is that when faith and Christian morals clash with strong adverse currents of error or vitiated appetites, attempts are made to overcome the difficulties with some sort of easy compromise, or otherwise to side-step and elude them.”

The road to hell is paved with compromise with evil, which is NEVER permitted.

Pope Pius XII next points out that many try to compromise with evil by trying to find an expedient way to conform the Commandment with evil, but such is not possible.

“Who does not see how in the clear knowledge that a determined human act is against the Commandment of God, it is implied that it cannot be directed to the end of union with Him, precisely because it contains the aversion, that is, the estrangement of the soul, from God and His will (*aversio a Deo fine ultimo*), an aversion which destroys union and friendship with Him, which is, precisely, the hallmark of grave sin? When man says "Yes" to the forbidden fruit, he says "No" to the prohibiting God; when he puts himself and his will before God and divine will; aversion to God and the intimate essence of grave sin consist in this.”

Not Thy will but my will is the road to hell. This is why We choose *Fiat voluntas Tua* (Thy will be done), because God's will is the road to heaven, and our will the road to hell.

St. Paul reminds us, ““If (according to man) I fought with beasts at Ephesus, what doth it profit it me, if the dead not rise again? Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we shall die. Be not seduced: Evil communications corrupt good manners. Awake ye just, and sin not. For some have not the knowledge of God, I speak it to your shame.” (I Corinthians 15:32-34)

And let us remember that much of what is broadcast on television and radio is corrupting and must be avoided.

Church Pronouncements on Radio, Movies and Television

The Church has not said a great deal on these subjects, since these inventions are new. In the next section we will see what the Fathers of the Church and the Saints had to say about theater, because television is nothing other than a *home theater*.

In 1954 Pope Pius XII wrote an Apostolic Letter, "The rapid advances which television has now made in many countries keeps Our attention ever more alert to this marvelous gift of science and technology, at once precious and dangerous by reason of the profound reverberations which it is destined to provoke in the private and public life of nations. We fully recognize the value of this brilliant conquest of science, which is a further manifestation of the wonderful splendors of God, Who "has given science to men that He may be honored in its marvels." Television too, therefore, imposes on all of us the duty of gratefulness which the Church tirelessly recommends to her children in the daily Holy Sacrifice of the Altar, with the admonition that "it is truly meet and just, right and salutary, always and everywhere to give thanks" to God for His gifts.

“In any case, it is not difficult to realize the innumerable advantages of television whenever it is placed at the service of man for his perfection.

“In recent years, the movies and sports, to say nothing of the necessity of daily work, have tended to draw the members of the family increasingly away from home, upsetting the natural development of domestic life. How can We not rejoice to see television efficaciously contributing to the restoration of balance, offering the whole family the chance of enjoying together pleasant recreation far from the dangers of unhealthy company and places? How can We be indifferent to the beneficent influence which television is able to exercise from the social point of view in respect to culture, popular education, scholastic teaching, and the very life of peoples, who through that instrument will certainly be helped to know and to understand one another better and to reach friendly concord and better mutual co-operation.

“Such considerations, however, must not blind us to another aspect of this delicate and important question. Although, in face, television properly controlled may constitute an effective means of wise and Christian education, it is equally true that it is not exempt from dangers which may be the result of abuses and profanation brought about by human weakness and malice-dangers all the more serious since the suggestive power of this instrument is greater and the public toward whom it is directed is wider and more indiscriminate.

Unlike the theater and the movies, whose spectacles are limited to those who choose to enter, television is directed above all, to family groups of every age and sex and of various cultural levels, bringing to them the daily news, sundry news items, and all kinds of spectacles. Like the radio, it can enter any house and go to any place at any time, bringing with it not only sounds and words but also the concreteness and mobility of its images, which gives it greater emotional influence, particularly in respect to the young. To this must be added the fact that television programs are based, in great part, on films and plays, which, as experience has shown, all too frequently do not satisfy the requirement of natural and Christian ethics. Lastly, it should be pointed out that television finds its keenest and most attentive audience among children and adolescents, who, by reason of their age can more easily fall prey to its fascination and, consciously or unconsciously, transmute into living reality the images they absorb from the animated picture on the screen. It is obvious, therefore, how intimately television affects the education of the young and the Christian spirit of the family.

“If we consider the inestimable value of the family, which is the primary cell of society, and if We reflect that within the walls of the home not only the bodily but also the spiritual development of the child must begin and grow-precious hope of the Church and of its country-We cannot but proclaim to all those who share the responsibilities of television that the duties and responsibilities which rest on their shoulders are extremely serious before God and society.

“Public authorities above all, must take every precaution, so that the atmosphere of decency and restraint which should surround family life may not be offended or troubled.

“Ever present in Our mind is the sad picture of the perturbing and evil power of the movies. But how can We help being horrified by the thought that through television the poisoned atmosphere of materialism, superficiality, and luxuriousness, which too often pervades the motion picture theaters, may penetrate the walls of the home? Truly, it would be impossible to imagine anything more fatal to spiritual forces of a nation than that, before so many innocent souls, in the bosom of the family itself, there should be repeated those sensational revelations of pleasure-seeking, of passion, and of evil which can shake and ruin for all time a whole edifice of purity, goodness, and healthy individual and social education.

“For these reasons, We deem it advisable to point out that the normal supervision which has to be exercised by the authorities responsible for public shows is not sufficient, in the case of television transmissions, to ensure satisfactory service from the moral point of view; there is a need for a different criterion, as it is here a question of spectacles destined to reach into the family sanctuary.

“Thus we see, particularly in this field, that there is no foundation in the supposed right to indiscriminate liberty in art and the plea that thought and the imparting of information are free; higher values are at stake, the violators of which would not be able to escape the heavy penalties threatened by the divine Saviour, “Woe to the world because of scandals! ... Woe to the man by whom the scandal cometh!”

“We cherish a profound trust that the lofty sense of responsibility of those who preside over public life will prevail in prevention of those sad possibilities which We have previously deplored. We are pleased to hope, rather, that as far as the programs are concerned, suitable instructions will be issued, so that television may serve the healthy recreation of the citizens and likewise contribute in all circumstances to their education and moral elevation. But in order that such desirable measure may find their full application, a careful and active vigilance will have to be exercised by all.” Pope Pius XII, Apostolic Letter, January 1, 1954

Since the public authorities have completely failed, We remind everyone of Our Predecessors last admonition: “But in order that such desirable measure may find their full application, a careful and active vigilance will have to be exercised by all.” Unfortunately television has become such a pervayer of filth, that extra vigilance is required. To determine our duty We shall consult Church pronouncements on books, radio and movies, which can be applied to the *home theater*.

In 1947 Pope Pius XII said, “The radio can be one of the most powerful means for spreading true civilization and culture. Today its services have become almost indispensable for educating men in the sense of solidarity, for the life of the State and the people; it is capable of creating a lively force of cohesion in peoples and between nations. It can bear witness before the whole world to the truth and glory of God, promote the victory of equity, bring light, consolation, hope, reconciliation, and love on this earth, and draw men and nations closer together. It can carry the voice of Christ, the truth of the Gospel, the spirit of the Gospel, and the charity of the Gospel to the ends of the earth. It gives also to Us, common Father of the faithful, the joy of being, at one and the same time, present to all Our children in the whole world, every time We send out our messages and impart Our blessing.

“All this the radio can do. But in the hands of blind or wicked men it can also lend itself to error and falsehood, base passions, sensuality, pride, covetousness, and hate; it can be turned into that open sepulcher full

of malediction and bitterness of which St. Paul speaks and which swallows up the Christian virtues, sound civilization, peace, and human happiness. ...

“At the service of the dignity of life and Christian ethics: It should hold sacred the child's innocence, and youth's purity, the holy chastity of matrimony, and the happiness of a family life based on the fear and love of God.

“At the service of justice: It should hold sacred the inviolable human rights no less than the right of the authorities to exact from the individual and the community the duties necessary for the common good; the right of peoples to existence, in particular of the weaker members, and alike the right of the great family of nations to request the sacrifices necessary for the peace of the world; the right of the church to bring, in the fullness of liberty, to all men and all peoples the wealth of the grace and peace of Christ.

“At the service of love: This is the duty of the present hour. At all costs it is necessary to overcome dissension and hate, of which the radio, too, has many times been made the instrument and agent. May it put its far-reaching powerful influence to the service of the noble ideal of Christian charity. ...

“Finally, We wish to draw attention to the understanding of the true needs of humanity and its spiritual nature, which the radio should serve by its musical transmissions. We have no intention of speaking now of those programs in which it would be very difficult to find any artistic merit, any educational value. ... Rather, We refer to the recital of sacred music, as well as to the efforts to make accessible to the public the works, sacred and profane, of the great modern and ancient composers, whose masterpieces arouse in the mind and soul the lofty sentiments by which they were themselves animated.” Address to the Congress of the 50th Anniversary of the Convezione Marcioniane Radio, October 3, 1947

Pope Pius XII states that the radio can become an open sepulcher. Television has far exceeded radio in becoming an open sepulcher of the most vile rotteness! And in another place he says:

“One wonders at times if the leaders of the motion picture industries fully appreciate the vast power they wield in affecting social life, whether in the family or the larger civil groups. The eyes and ears are like broad avenues that lead directly to the soul of man; and they are opened wide, most often without challenge, by the spectators of your films. What is it that enters from the screen into the inner recesses of the mind, where youth's fund of knowledge is growing and where norms and motives of conduct that will mold the definitive character are being shaped and sharpened? Is it something that will contribute to the formation of a better citizen, industrious, law-abiding, God-fearing, who finds his joy and recreation in wholesome pleasure and amusement? St. Paul was quoting Meander, an ancient Greek poet, when he wrote to the faithful of his church in Corinth that "bad conversation corrupts good manners." What was true then is no less true today; because human nature changes little with the centuries. And if it is true, as it is, that bad conversation corrupts morals, how much more effectively are they corrupted by bad conversation when accompanied by conduct, vividly depicted, which flouts the laws of God and civilized decency? Oh, the immense amount of good the motion picture can effect! This is why the evil spirit, always so active in this world, wishes to pervert this instrument for his own impious purposes; and it is encouraging to know that your committee is aware of the danger, and more and more conscious of its grave responsibility before society and God. It is for public opinion to sustain wholeheartedly and effectively every legitimate effort made by men of integrity and honor to purify the movies and keep them clean, to improve them and increase their usefulness.” July 14, 1945 Pope Pius XII Address to United States Movie Producers

How many eyes and ears sit hours in front of the television, like broad avenues that lead directly to the soul of man; and they are opened wide, most often without challenge, by the spectators of your films, and programs? How many shall find that their eyes and ears shall burn in hell for the sins committed by improper use of the television and other media?

In 1955 Pope Pius XII described the ideal film, “The first quality which should mark the ideal film is respect for man. For there is indeed no reason whereby it can be exempted from the general norm which demands that he who deals with men should fully respect man. However much difference of age, condition, and sex may suggest a difference in conduct and bearing, man is always man, with the dignity and nobility bestowed on him by the Creator, in Whose image and likeness he was made (Genesis 1:26). In man there is a spiritual and immortal soul; there is the universe in miniature, with its multiplicity and variety of form, and the marvelous order of all its parts; there is thought and will, with a vast field in which to operate; there is emotional life, with its heights and depths; there is the world of senses, with its numerous powers, perceptions, and feelings; there is the body, formed even to its minutest parts according to a teleology not yet fully grasped. Man has been made

lord in this universe; freely he must direct his actions in accord with the laws of truth, goodness, and beauty, as they are manifested in nature, his social relations with his fellow men, and divine revelation.

“Since the motion picture, as has been noted, can incline the soul of the viewer to good or to evil, We will call ideal only that film which not only does not offend what We have just described, but treats it respectfully. Even that is not enough! Rather We should say: that which strengthens and uplifts man in the consciousness of his dignity, that which increases his knowledge and love of the lofty position conferred on him by his Creator; that which tells him it is possible for him to increase the gifts of energy and virtue he disposes of within himself; that which strengthens his conviction that he can overcome obstacles and avoid erroneous solutions, that he can rise after every fall and return to the right path, that he can, in sum, progress from good to better through the use of his freedom and his faculties.

“Such a motion picture would already contain the basic element of an ideal film; but more still can be attributed to it, if to respect for man is added a loving understanding of him. Recall the touching phrase of the Lord: “I have pity on this people.”

“The ideal motion picture must speak to the child in language suited to a child, to youth in a way fitted to it, to the adult as he expects to be spoken to, that is, using his own manner of seeing and understanding things,” Pope Pius XII, Address to the Representatives of the Italian Movie Industry, June 21, 1955.

How far short every movie and television show falls from the ideal! This is indeed a scandal that the media which should be most helpful toward our salvation, actually lead us rapidly away from salvation toward perdition!

Let us consider Pope Pius XI's encyclical on movies:

Vigilanti Cura

Excerpts from the Encyclical letter of Pope Pius XI, July 29, 1936

In following with vigilant eye, as Our Pastoral Office requires, the beneficent work of Our Brethren in the Episcopate and of the faithful, it has been highly pleasing to Us to learn of the fruits already gathered and of the progress which continues to be made by that prudent initiative launched more than two years ago as a holy crusade against the abuses of the motion pictures and entrusted in a special manner to the “Legion of Decency”.

This excellent experiment now offers Us a most welcome opportunity of manifesting more fully Our thought in regard to a matter which touches intimately the moral and religious life of the entire Christian people.

First of all, We express Our gratitude to the Hierarchy of the United States of America and to the faithful who co-operated with them, for the important results already achieved, under their direction and guidance, by the “Legion of Decency”. And Our gratitude is all the livelier for the fact that We are deeply anguished to note with each passing day the lamentable progress- *magni passus extra viam* - of the motion picture art and industry in the portrayal of sin and vice.

As often as the occasion has presented itself, We have considered it the duty of Our high Office to direct to this condition the attention not only of the Episcopate and the Clergy but also of all men who are right-minded and solicitous for the public weal. In the Encyclical “*Divini illius Magistri*” We had already deplored that “potent instrumentalities of publicity (such as the cinema) which might be of great advantage to learning and education were they properly directed by healthy principles, often unfortunately serve as incentives to evil passions and are subordinated to sordid gain.”

...

It is, in fact, urgently necessary to make provision that in this field also the progress of the arts, of the sciences, and of human technique and industry, since they are all true gifts of God, may be ordained to His glory and to the salvation of souls and may be made to serve in a practical way to promote the extension of the Kingdom of God upon earth. Thus, as the Church bids us pray, we may all profit by them but in such a manner as not to lose the goods eternal: “*sic transeamus per bona temporalia ut non amittamus aeterna*” (from the Mass of the Third Sunday after Pentecost)

Now then, it is certainty which can be readily verified that the more marvelous the progress of the motion picture art and industry, the more pernicious and deadly has it shown itself to morality and to religion and even to the very decencies of human society.

The directors of the industry in the United States recognized this fact themselves when they confessed that the responsibility before the people and the world was their own. In an agreement entered into by common accord in March, 1930, and solemnly sealed, signed, and published in the Press, they formally pledged themselves to safeguard for the future the moral welfare of the patrons of the cinema. It is promised in this

agreement that no film which lowers the moral standards of the spectators, which casts discredit upon natural or human law or arouses sympathy for their violation, will be produced.

Nevertheless in spite of this wise and spontaneously taken decision, those responsible showed themselves incapable of carrying it into effect and it appeared that the producers and the operators were not disposed to stand by the principles to which they had bound themselves. Since, therefore, the above-mentioned undertaking proved to have but slight effect and since the parade of vice and crime continued on the screen, the road seemed almost closed to those who sought honest diversion in the motion picture.

Your leadership called forth the prompt and devoted loyalty of your faithful people, and millions of American Catholics signed the pledge of the "Legion of Decency" binding themselves not to attend any motion picture which was offensive to Catholic moral principles or proper standards of living.

...

Recreation, in its manifold varieties, has become a necessity for people who work under fatiguing conditions of modern industry, but it must be worthy of the rational nature of man and therefore must be morally healthy. It must be elevated to the rank of a positive factor for good and must seek to arouse noble sentiments. A people who, in time of repose, give themselves to diversion which violate decency, honor, or morality, to recreations which, especially in the young, constitute an occasion of sin, are in grave danger of losing their greatness and even their national power.

It admits of no discussion that the motion picture has achieved a position of universal importance among modern means of diversion.

...

Since then the cinema is in reality a sort of object lesson which, for good or for evil, teaches the majority of men more effectively than abstract reasoning, it must be elevated to conformity with the aims of Christian conscience and saved from depraving and demoralizing effects.

Everyone knows what damage is done to the soul by bad motion pictures (or television). They are occasions of sin; they seduce young people along the ways of evil by glorifying the passions; they show life under a false light; they cloud ideals; they destroy pure love, respect for marriage, affection for the family. They are capable also of creating prejudices among individuals and misunderstandings among nations, among social classes, among entire races.

On the other hand, good motion pictures are capable of exercising a profoundly moral influence upon those who see them. In addition to affording recreation, they are able to arouse noble ideals of life, to communicate valuable conceptions, to impart a better knowledge of the history and the beauties of the Fatherland and of other countries, to present truth and virtue under attractive forms, to create, or at least favour understanding among nations, social classes, and races, to champion the cause of justice, to give new life to the claims of virtue, and to contribute positively to the genesis of a just social order in the world.

...

It is unfortunate that, in the present state of affairs, this influence is frequently exerted for evil. So much so that when one thinks of the havoc wrought in the souls of youth and of childhood, of the loss of innocence so often suffered in the motion picture theaters, there comes to mind the terrible condemnation pronounced by Our Lord upon the corrupters of little ones: "Whosoever shall scandalize one of these little ones who believe in Me, it were better for him that a mill stone be hanged about his neck and that he be drowned in the depths of the sea."

It is therefore one of the supreme necessities of our times to watch and to labour to the end that the motion picture be no longer a school of corruption but that it be transformed into an effectual instrument for the education and the elevation of mankind.

...

It is equally the duty of the Bishops of the entire Catholic world to unite in vigilance over this universal and potent form of entertainment and instruction, to the end that they may be able to place a ban on bad motion pictures because they are an offense to the moral and religious sentiments and because they are in opposition to the Christian spirit and to its ethical principles. There must be no weariness in combating whatever contributes to the lessening of the people's sense of decency and of honor.

This is an obligation which binds not only the Bishops but also the faithful and all decent men who are solicitous for the decorum and moral health of the family, of the nation, and of human society in general.

...

Their sacred calling constrains them (the Bishops) to proclaim clearly and openly that unhealthy and impure entertainment destroys the moral fibre of a nation. They will likewise remind the motion picture industry that the demands which they make regard not only Catholics but all who patronize the cinema.

The prediction of Pope Pius XI, that unhealthy and impure entertainment destroys the moral fibre of a nation, has been fulfilled. Throughout the world all manner of vice and evil, unthinkable years ago is now common place and even receives legitimacy from various groups, including the public officials who should be protecting the common good, but are destroying all good, common or otherwise by their actions and omissions!

We are deeply anguished to note with each passing day the lamentable progress- *magni passus extra viam* - of the motion picture art and industry in the portrayal of sin and vices, (in 1936). This lamentable progress has now escalated to new heights of sin and vice which were probably unimaginable in Pope Pius XI's day!

Since, therefore, the above-mentioned undertaking proved to have but slight effect and since the parade of vice and crime continued on the screen, the road seemed almost closed to those who sought honest diversion in the motion picture. The road, which was almost closed in 1936, is certainly virtually impassable today with the increase in depravity in movies and television! Pope Pius XI reminds us that all of us have a duty in this regard, not just the clergy. Let us make the Pledge of the Legion of Decency our own, since it is based on the Natural Law, which is written on our hearts.

The responsibility of those people who make the radio an instrument of intellectual or moral corruption presents no problem; it merely calls for the brand of infamy. That of the indifferent, the apathetic, the skeptical, very great reason of the serious and often imperceptible consequences, calls for something else; it confronts us with the difficulty-a difficulty rather than a problem of making him understand that he is doing wrong.

The problem arises when it is a question of presenting, with honest and often praiseworthy intentions, arguments, events, or questions legitimately interesting and useful from a literary, artistic, psychological, moral or social point of view. And this is what then perplexes the mind: Should we hold our peace when it might be fitting of necessary to speak, or should we speak and run the risk of alarming certain ears, perturbing certain souls, but above all of contaminating the candid innocence of childish hearts? Adults have only themselves to blame, for their indiscreet or unwise curiosity; but what about the children who, thoughtlessly and without serious malice, so easily evade on this point their parent's supervision? It is the duty of a speaker over the radio to use a language of such tact and reticence that he may be understood by adults without rousing the imagination or troubling the simplicity of the young., Pope Pius XII Address to Radio Announcers, April 22, 1948.

The Fathers on the Theater

St. John Chrysostom in his Baptismal Instruction states:

“Let there be no more talk about the hippodrome and the lawless spectacle of the theatre, for they provide the fuel for licentiousness; let there be no talk of the cruel pleasure derived from the combat of wild beasts and men. For what pleasure is there in watching a fellow human, who shares in the same nature as yourself, being mangled by savage beasts? Are you not afraid, do you not shudder, for fear that a thunderbolt might fall from on high and set your head ablaze? For it is you, one might say, who sharpen the teeth of the beast. You, by your shouts have a personal part in the murder, if not by your hand, at least by your tongue.”

St. Augustine in his First Catechetical Instruction reminds us:

“There are also men who neither seek to be rich nor go about striving the vain pomp of honor, but wish to find their pleasure and satisfaction in gluttony (and drunkenness) and debaucheries (i.e. lust), in theatres and frivolous shows, which they have free of charge in great cities. (which can be found on television now) But thus they also both squander their small means in riotous living, and afterwards under pressure of want, breakout into thefts and burglaries, and sometimes even into highway robberies, and are suddenly filled with fears both numerous and great, and they who a little before were singing in the tavern now dream of the sorrows of prison.

Moreover, in their eager pursuit of the games, they become like demons as they incite men by their cries to kill one another and to engage in furious contests, men who have done no injury to one another, but desire only to please a frantic mob; and if they observe that they are peaceably disposed, they straightway hate and persecute them, and raise a cry for them to be clubbed, on the ground that they are in collusion; and in this wickedness they compel even the judge who is the avenger of wickedness to commit. But if they perceive that they wreak their most frightful enmity upon each other-whether they be what are called 'sintae' or actors and the stage-chorus, or charioteer, or common gladiators, poor wretches whom they pit in a fighting contest against one another, not only men against men, but even men against wild beasts-and the fiercer the fury with which they perceive them to rage against one another, the more they love them and delight in them. They second them when in fury, and rouse it by seconding them, the spectators themselves being madder against each other, as they second this combatant or that, than those whose madness they madly provoke, and whom they madly, too, desire to gaze upon. How, then, can the mind which feeds on dissension and strife preserve the health which comes from peace? For as the food taken, so is the resulting state of health. Finally, though mad pleasures are no pleasures, yet of whatever kind they are, and however much the display of riches, the pride of honors, and the devouring gluttony of taverns, and the factions of the theatres, and the uncleanness of fornication, and the lasciviousness of the baths give delight, yet one little fever carries all these things away, and robs them of the whole vain happiness of their life while yet alive. There remains a void and wounded conscience which shall experience the judgement of God whose protection it disdained to have; and shall find in Him a severe Lord whom it scorned to seek and love as a gentle Father."

What would St. Augustine say today, when the theater is brought into the home and rather than being watched for a couple of hours in the evening runs morning, noon and night? What would St. Augustine say about a boxing match, "whom they pit in a fighting contest against one another"? Think well how much time is squandered before the television, and then consider what St. Augustine says next:

"But you, inasmuch as you are seeking that true rest which is promised to Christians after this life, shall taste its sweetness and comfort even here amid the bitterest afflictions of this life, if you love the commandments of Him who has promised it. For quickly will you realize that the fruits of goodness are sweeter than those of iniquity, and that a man finds a more genuine and pleasurable joy in a good conscience amidst afflictions than he who has a bad conscience amid delights; for you have not come to be joined to the Church of God with the object of seeking some temporal advantage."

"Seated where there is nothing of God, will one be thinking of his Maker?" Absolutely not. Even if there were no other objection, this one would be sufficient reason to consider turning away.

Saint Alphonsus says:

"And let it be remembered that females who keep their breast uncovered, or dress immodestly in any other way, are guilty of the sin of scandal, as also actors in immodest comedies, and still more the persons who compose such comedies; also painters who paint obscene pictures, and the heads of families who keep such pictures in their houses." [\[31\]](#)

"A parent should forbid his children to wear masks, to go to dances, or to act a part in comedies." [\[32\]](#)

"Be careful also not to permit your sons to act a part in comedies, nor even to be present at an immodest comedy. A young man or woman goes to such comedies in the grace of God, and returns home his enemy. Do not allow your children to go to certain festivities (which are feasts of the devil) in which there is dancing, courtships, immodest singing, and sinful amusements. "Where there is dancing," says St. Ephrem, "there a feast of the devil is celebrated." But you will say, "We only jest; what harm is there in that?" "They are not amusements," says St. Peter Chrysologus, "but greivous offenses against God." [\[33\]](#)

"The unhappy soul will then say: Had I mortified myself by not looking at such an object; ... if I had read a spiritual book every day;" [\[34\]](#)

"... he who is ... wholly absorbed with the attractions of the theatre and ballroom can have no valid claim to the title of faithful Catholic." [\[35\]](#)

"Beware of trying to find out the faults of your neighbor." [\[36\]](#)

"If in your presence unbecoming and sinful language is used, leave the company if it is possible to do so." [\[37\]](#)

Let us consider that if anything evil comes on television, there is a button on it to end the evil and turn it off. Then we should say a prayer asking God's forgiveness for all involved and that He may enlighten them to the millions of sins they participating in by scandal.

The Breviary comments on Saint Peter Chrysologus:

“The people had a custom of assisting on the first day of January at certain games, which consisted of theatrical performances and dances; the saint repressed these by the severity with which he preached against them. One of his expressions deserves to be handed down: 'He that jests with the devil, can never enjoy the company of Christ.'”

A story from the Cure of Ars

St. Augustine gives us a good example of this. He tells us that he once had a friend, a young man, who led a perfectly good life.

One day he was in the company of his fellow-students, who did not like it that he always lived and acted differently from them. They urged him to go with them to the amphitheater, where there was a prize-fight among men. As our young friend detested such shows, he resisted with all his might. Finally they urged him so much, that he consented with the words:

"Very well. I will go with you, but only my body will be there standing among you. My mind and my eyes will not partake in this horrible spectacle."

So they led him forth, and, while the whole multitude went wild with barbarous delight, the young man took no part and kept his eyes shut. Would that he had also stopped his ears, for at a certain great noise curiosity got the better of him and he opened his eyes. That was sufficient to ruin him. The more he saw the more delighted was he, and after that there was no need of urging him to visit the place. He was only too eager to go there and to induce others to go with him.

"Oh, my Lord!" exclaimed St. Augustine, "who will lead him away from this abyss? The grace of God alone can do it!"

From De Spectaculis

Tertullian

From 'De Spectaculis'

Chapter 27 begins with something that is common in movies and on television of all kinds: “We ought to detest these heathen meetings and assemblies, if on no other account than that there God's Name is blasphemed.” This is objectively a mortal sin and should not be said or listened to!

“Ye Servants of God, about to draw near to God, that you may make solemn consecration of yourselves to Him, seek well to understand the condition of faith, the reasons of the Truth, the laws of Christian discipline, which forbid among other sins of the world, the pleasures of public shows.” (Note this would apply to movies, sporting events and television.)

“For such is the power of earthly pleasures, that, to retain the opportunity of still partaking of them, it contrives to prolong a willing ignorance, and bribes knowledge into playing a dishonest part.”

“It, therefore, it shall be made plain that the entire apparatus of shows is based upon idolatry, beyond all doubt that will carry with it the conclusion that our renunciatory testimony in the laver of baptism has reference to the shows, which through their idolatry, have been given over to the devil, and his pomp, and his angels.” The modern doctrine of Do what thou wilt, which came out in the 1960's as Do your own thing, is promulgated and promoted in movies and on television, as well as all manner of perversity.

“If, then, we keep throat and belly free from such defilements, how much more do we withhold our nobler parts, our ears and eyes, from the idolatrous and funereal enjoyments, which are not passed through the body, but are digested in the very spirit and soul, whose purity, much more than that of our bodily organs, God as a right to claim from us.”

“But is we ought to abominate all that is immodest, on what ground is it right to hear what we must not speak? ... What you reject in deed, you are not to bid welcome in word.”

“For the show always leads to spiritual agitation, since where there is pleasure, there is keenness of feeling giving pleasure its zest; and there there is keenness of feeling, there is rivalry giving in turn its zest.”

Frequenting Theaters.

From Theory and Practice of the Confessional

“Theatrical performances (in the wider sense of the term) are, according to the teaching of St. Thomas, [38] *secundum se*, not sinful, but may become gravely so, by offending against religion and good morals, in the matter represented or in the manner of representing it. Very many modern dramas are of the latter kind, and full of dangers, treating as they do of anti-religious subjects or of such as are hostile to faith, or lascivious; degrading the Catholic faith, distorting historical facts to its detriment, extolling the enemies of the Church, holding up holy rites and even the Sacraments of the Church to mockery and contempt, calumniating priests, making vices, such as adultery, revenge, suicide, and sins of the flesh, appear lawful or even glorifying them; characterizing religion in general as ridiculous, superstitious, etc., treating not only of obscene and dangerous subjects, but also offending decency in the manner of representation.

“If, therefore, the dramas in question are notably contrary to religion (*Religioni notabiliter contraria*), or if the subject-matter or the manner of representing it are *nimis turpia* (too base), attendance is certainly a grave sin. For what may not be seen, or heard, or read, *extra theatrum*, without great sin, cannot be, as the Angelic Master expresses himself, *ratione theatri leviora*. (the lighter aspect of the theater)

“If they are notably, but not *nimis turpia*, (very bad) they may be *occasio relativa*, (a relative occasion of sin) and frequenting them out of curiosity or for amusement (if there is no danger of consenting in *turpem delectationem* (against the sixth commandment)) may be free from grave sin. But this danger will, in the case of young people, be absent only when they have very tender consciences, conduct themselves very prudently, and when, after being repeatedly present at such performances, they are able to say that they have not committed mortal sin. Performances, however, which are *non notabiliter turpia* (is not notably base), may be an *occasio proxima*, for those who know by experience their own weakness, the more so as nowadays doubtful attractions are introduced even into otherwise good or harmless plays.

“The so-called *choreas scenicae* (ballet), *quae inter actus miscentur, utpote in quibus ob vestitum saltatricum, ob scaenos saltandi modos aut lascivas gesticulationes, maxima apparere solet turpitudine*, will probably be for many theatergoers an *occasio proxima*. (stage-dancing, which act between the mix with men, whom for their clothing as being in a dancing, wanton, or modes of dance-visaged debauchees gestures, eg, the greatest turpitude is wont to appear.)

When, therefore, one goes to a theater without exercising any discrimination as to the choice of the play or the manner of its performance, he exposes himself to a probable danger of sin, *ex communiter contingentibus fit prudens praesumptio*. Some, however, maintain that they attend chiefly to the music, not to the plot and its representation; this, of course, would materially reduce the danger, but not wholly remove it.

“Frequenting the theater may also become sinful on account of the sinful intention connected with it, and by the scandal thereby given. Besides the actors and actresses in a bad play, those also give scandal who cooperate in *spectacula notabiliter turpia* (notably base spectacles or gravely adverse to religion) *aut Religioni graviter adversa*, positively, by money or applause, and, negatively, by not preventing them when *ex officio* they were bound to do so, or at least could have prevented them by some other means; for example, by refusing to cooperate, etc. [39] Moreover, parents and other superiors give scandal who do not effectually prevent their children and those under their care from being present at improper representations, or when they give permission to go there, without having previously ascertained the character of the play. Finally, those give scandal who encourage others (especially young people) by their example to attend theaters, also clerics and religious who, contrary to ecclesiastical regulations, are present at secular performances. [40]

“If, therefore, by going to the theater, a person exposes himself to only slight danger, and only gives slight scandal, he is free from grave sin if he takes the necessary precautions.

“But if he suffers great danger, or gives great scandal, only a *causa gravis* (grave cause) would excuse him from grave sin if he takes the necessary precautions, and tries to the best of his power to make good the scandal. Such *causa gravis* would be, for instance, a well-founded fear of great detriment, continued irritation of parents, of husband or wife, etc.; the loss of the subscription fee would not be a *causa sufficiens*. But even when there is a *causa*, and, in spite of precautions, faith is endangered, or if the person often succumbs to temptation, he is absolutely bound to avoid the occasion. Hence no *causa* will excuse frequentation of a very immoral or godless performance, because it will not be possible to avoid the formal danger which accompanies it.

“In cases where it is necessary, the penitent must be strictly bound to avoid the theater or certain plays; even where this obligation is not strictly binding, he must still be persuaded to avoid the theater, and if this is not possible or opportune, the priest must at least instruct the penitent cautiously to conduct himself.

“The actors in immoral and godless plays cannot, of course, be admitted to the Sacraments till they have either given up their profession, or no longer take part in such performances, for they are *peccatores publici, publicum scandalum prabentes*. (public sinners) [41]

The Church on Books and Reading

Much has been said on this subject. By analogy we can apply the same principles to television, movies and the theater that we apply to books.

By the law itself are forbidden (by Canon 1399):

1. Editions of the original text or of ancient Catholic versions of the Sacred Scriptures (including those of the Oriental Church), published by any non-Catholics whatsoever; likewise translations of these texts made or published by non-Catholics;
2. books of any writers defending heresy or schism, or tending in any way to undermine the very foundations of religion;
3. books which avowedly attack religion or good morals;
4. books of any non-Catholics treating professedly of religion, unless it is certain that they contain nothing contrary to the Catholic faith;
5. books of Sacred Scripture, note and commentaries thereon, and translations which have been published without the permission required by Canon 1385 and Canon 1391; books and pamphlets which give an account of new apparitions, revelations, visions, prophecies, or miracles, or which introduce new devotions (even if it is claimed that the devotions are private), unless the precepts of the Canons regarding their publication have been observed;
6. books which attack or ridicule any of the Catholic dogmas, or which defend errors condemned by the Holy See, or which disparage divine worship, or strive to overthrow ecclesiastical discipline, or which have the avowed aim of defaming the ecclesiastical hierarchy or the clerical or religious states;
7. books which teach or approve of any kind of superstition, fortune-telling, divination, magic, communication with spirits, and other things of that kind;
8. books which declare duels, suicide, or divorce as licit; which treat of the masonic and other similar sects, and contend that these are not pernicious, but rather useful to the Church and civil society;
9. books which professedly discuss, describe or teach impure or obscene topics;
10. editions of liturgical books approved by the Holy See, which have been unlawfully changed in some particulars so that they no longer agree with the authentic and approved editions.
11. books which publish indulgences which are apocryphal, or which are condemned or recalled by the Holy see;
12. any images whatsoever of Our Lord, of the Blessed Virgin, of the angels, or of the saints or other servants of God, which are not in harmony with the spirit and Decrees of the Church.

It should be noted that on October 14, 1966, Paul VI removed this Canon from the Code of Canon Law, thus in effect permitting pornography.

Before proceeding to the relation of Canon 1399 to radio, television and movies, we shall consider the necessary permission to read forbidden books and the precautions involved:

“Cardinals and bishops (both residential and titular) and other Ordinaries, are not bound by the ecclesiastical prohibition of books provided they employ the necessary precautions,” Canon 1401

Although these men are supposed to be quite learned in theological matters and able to investigate forbidden matters and must do so in the discharge of their office on occasion, they are reminded that this necessary occasion of sin, coming from their office, requires them to take precautions to avoid sin. These books condemned by Canon 1399 ipso facto, by their very existence are dangerous and if the most learned and holy members of the Church (as Bishops and Cardinals should be) are warned to take precautions, how much more dangerous are these books to other clerics and laymen, who are less learned in these matters?

“In the case of books forbidden by the general law of the Church or by Decree of the Holy See, Ordinaries can give their subject permission to read only individual books and in urgent cases only. If the Ordinaries have obtained from the Holy See a general faculty to allow their subjects to keep and read forbidden books, they shall grant this permission only with discretion and for a good and reasonable cause.” Canon 1402.

“The permission to read forbidden books exempts nobody from the prohibition of the natural law, which forbids the reading of books which are for the particular reader a proximate occasion of sin. Local Ordinaries and others who have the care of souls shall on opportune occasions warn the faithful of the danger and harm of reading bad books, especially such as have been forbidden.” Canon 1405

Although a person has obtained permission to read condemned books for some reason, he may not do so, if they are a proximate occasion of sin. In this case the provisions of the natural law override the permission obtained under ecclesiastical law. Therefore the general principle is that any work, which is a proximate occasion of sin must be avoided, no matter what source it comes from. (ie. books, radio, television, etc.)

An excommunication reserved to the Apostolic See in a special manner is incurred ipso facto by the publishers of books written by apostates, heretics and schismatics in defense of apostasy, heresy or schism; also by persons who defend or knowingly read or retain (in their possession) without due permission the above mentioned books and others which have been by name forbidden by Apostolic Letters., Canon 2318, paragraph 1

It should be obvious that we cannot claim to be followers of Blessed Jesus, if we contradict the ethical principles of the Gospel and refuse to follow the command, "If any man will come after Me," said He, "let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Matthew 26:24)

“And we find some writers who have gone to such lengths of boldness and impudence as to propagate in their books those very vices which the Apostle forbade to be so much as mentioned by Christians. "But fornication, and all uncleanness ... let it not so much as named among you, as becometh saints." (Ephesians 5:3). Oh that such men might learn at last that they cannot serve two masters, God and lust, religion and impurity! "He that is not with Me is against Me.", said the Lord Jesus (Matthew 12:30), and certainly those writers are not with Christ, who by their filthy descriptions poison morality, which is the true basis of civil and domestic society. In consideration, therefore, of the deluge of filthy literature which is pouring in a rising flood upon practically all nations, this Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, which is intrusted with the guardianship of faith and morals, does by apostolic authority and in the name of His Holiness, by Divine Providence Pope Pius XI, command all Ordinaries of places to strive by all means in their power to remedy so great and so urgent an evil. Certainly it is the part of those who have been placed by the Holy Ghost to rule the Church of God to exercise an alert and diligent watchfulness over everything that is printed and published in their dioceses. Everyone knows that books which nowadays are current all over the world are too numerous to be examined by the Holy See. Hence, Pius X of happy memory declared in his Motu Proprio, 'Sacrorum Antistitum': "Whatever books are current in your dioceses of such a nature as to be harmful to readers, make earnest efforts to get rid of them, even by solemn proscription. For although the Holy See is making every effort to get rid of such books, they have already grown so numerous that it is scarcely possible to examine them all. And so the remedy often comes too late, after the evil through long delay has grown inveterate."

“And yet the greater part of those volumes and booklets, although most pernicious, cannot be condemned by a special censure of this Supreme Congregation. hence, the Ordinaries, according to Canon 1397, paragraph 4, must, either by themselves or through the Council of Vigilance which the same Supreme Pontiff established by his Encyclical, 'Pascendi dominici gregis', constantly and earnestly strive to fulfill this most important duty; and they should not fail to denounce those books, as occasion offers, in their diocesan papers, as condemned and extremely harmful.

“Moreover, as everyone knows, the Church has already provided by general law that all books which are tainted with immorality, and which of set purpose or openly attack the integrity of morals, be regarded as forbidden just as if they had actually been placed on the Index of forbidden books. It follows that persons who without due permission read a book that is undoubtedly salacious, even though it is not condemned by name by the ecclesiastical authorities, commit a mortal sin. And since in this most important matter false and disastrous opinions are current among the faithful, Ordinaries of places must see to it that especially pastors and their assistants give attention to this matter and give the needed instruction to the people.

“Besides, the Ordinaries must not fail to declare openly according to the needs of their respective dioceses, what books by name are forbidden by the law itself. and if they think that they can more effectively or speedily protect the faithful from any particular book by condemning it by special decree, they must by all means make use of this power, just as the Holy see commonly does when grave reasons require it, according to Canon 1395, paragraph 1: "The right and duty of forbidding books for grave cause belongs not only to the supreme ecclesiastical authority for the universal Church, but also to particular Councils and Ordinaries of

places, for their subjects."

"Finally, this Supreme Sacred Congregation orders all Archbishops, Bishops and other Ordinaries of places, on the occasion of their diocesan report, to make known to the Holy See what measures they have taken and put into execution against lascivious books., Holy Office, Instruction, 3 May, 1927.

Although directed mainly to Ordinaries, there are things in this instruction that apply equally to all. Ordinaries were told to get rid of objectionable books, because the volume of them is so great that the Apostolic See is no longer able to keep up. If this is true in 1927, when the Curia was a massive operation, how much more so today, when the Apostolic See consists of the Pope assisted by a few Catholic laymen! We remind the faithful of their duty to denounce evil books, movies, television to the proper ecclesiastical authorities. (i.e. their Ordinary)

It follows that persons who without due permission read a book that is undoubtedly salacious, even though it is not condemned by name by the ecclesiastical authorities, commit a mortal sin.

On the occasion of condemning and placing on the Index all the works of one Albert Pincherle (or Moravia), the Holy Office proceeded to say: "On this occasion the Most Eminent and Most Reverend Fathers, deploring the immense harm that is done to souls, first by the unrestrained license to publish and diffuse books, booklets, and periodicals (and other forms of communication, such as radio, television and movies) which of set purpose narrate, describe, and teach things that are lacivious and obscene, and also by the fatal eagerness to read such matter indiscriminately, decided to issue the following warnings:

"To all the faithful: that they remember their very grave obligation to abstain entirely from the reading of such books and periodicals; To those who have charge of the instruction and education of youth: that, conscious of their grave responsibility, they keep their charges away from such writings entirely, as from an insidious poison;

"Finally, to those who in virtue of their office have the responsibility of regulating the morality of citizens: that they do not permit such writings, which strive to subvert the very principles and foundations of natural morality, to be published and distributed. On the 3rd day of April, 1952, in the audience granted as usual to His Excellency the Most Reverend Assessor of the Holy Office, His Holiness Pope Pius XII approved the resolution of the Eminent Fathers when it was reported to him, confirmed it and ordered that it be published."

Given at Rome, from the Holy Office, 20 May, 1952.

An Instruction of the Holy Office to Archbishops, Bishops, and other Ordinaries of places on sensual and sensual-mystic literature, is as follows:

"Among the most terrible of the evils which in our age are utterly undermining the moral teaching of Christ, and doing so much harm to souls redeemed by His precious Blood, a prominent place belongs to that type of literature which exploits sensuality and lust, or even a certain lascivious mysticism. To this class belongs especially certain romances, fanciful tales, plays, and comedies - types of literature of which our age is remarkably prolific, and which are daily being produced in increasing quantities.

"Such works of literary art, which exert so great an influence upon many persons, especially among young people, if only they kept within the bounds of decency, which certainly are not too narrow, would be able not only to afford innocent pleasure, but even to elevate the morals of the reader.

"But the fact is, alas, that this abundance of books which combine a frivolous fascination with immorality, is the cause of a very great loss of souls. For many of these writers depict immodesties in flaming imagery; relate the most obscene details, sometimes guardedly, sometimes openly and shamelessly, without the least regard for the requirements of modesty; they describe even the worst carnal vices with subtle analysis, and adorn them with all the brilliancy and allurements of style, to such a degree that nothing in the field of morals is left inviolate. It is easy to see how harmful all this is, especially to young people, in whom the fire of youth makes chastity more difficult. These books, often small in size, are sold at low prices in book stores, on the streets and squares of cities, at railroad stations; they come very quickly into everybody's hands, and bring great and often fateful dangers to Catholic families. For it is well known that writing of that sort violently excites the imagination, wildly inflames the passions, and drags the heart into the mire of impurity.

"There is a kind of love story worse than the rest, being written by authors who, to their shame, do not hesitate to give their sensuality the appearance of rectitude by blending it with sacred things. Into their stories of impure love they weave a sort of piety toward God and a very false religious mysticism; as if faith could be

consistent with the neglect, or rather the impudent denial of a right moral standard; or the virtue of religion be found associated with immorality! On the contrary the teaching of the Church is that no one can attain eternal life, no matter how firmly he may believe the truths of revelation, unless he keeps the commandments of God; for one who professes faith in Christ and does not follow the footsteps of Christ is not deserving even of the name Christian. "Faith without works is dead" (James 2:6). And our Saviour warns us: "Not everyone that saith to Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven: but he that doth the will of My Father who is in heaven, he shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

"Let no one make these excuses; that many of those books have a truly admirable brilliance and elegance of style; that they are remarkable for inculcating a psychology in accord with modern discoveries; that the lascivious bodily pleasures are reprobated in as much as they are represented in their true light as most foul, or are sometimes shown to be connected with qualms of conscience, or in as much as it is shown how often the basest pleasures give way at last to the sorrow of a sort of repentance. For neither elegance of style nor medical or philosophic lore-if indeed these are things to be found in that sort of writing-nor the intention of the authors, whatever it may be, can prevent the readers, who owing to the corruption of nature are usually very weak and must inclined to impurity, from being gradually enmeshed in the allurements of those unclean pages, from becoming depraved in mind and heart, and finally from throwing away the reins that curb their passions, falling into all kinds of sins, and at times, grown weary of a life full of squalor, even committing suicide.

"It is not to be wondered at that the world, which seeks its own even to the contempt of God, should be delighted with such books and should spread them; but it is very deplorable that writers who call themselves Christian should give their time and talent to such deadly literature. can one who contradicts the ethical principles of the Gospel, yet be a follower of the Blessed Jesus who commanded all men to crucify their flesh with its vices and concupiscences? "If any man will come after Me," said He, "let him deny himself and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Matthew 26:24)

"And we find some writers who have gone to such lengths of boldness and impudence as to propagate in their books those very vices which the Apostle forbade to be so much as mentioned by Christians. "But fornication, and all uncleanness ... let it not so much as named among you, as becometh saints." (Ephesians 5:3). Oh that such men might learn at last that they cannot serve two masters, God and lust, religion and impurity! "He that is not with Me is against Me.", said the Lord Jesus (Matthew 12:30), and certainly those writers are not with Christ, who by their filthy descriptions poison morality, which is the true basis of civil and domestic society.

"In consideration, therefore, of the deluge of filthy literature which is pouring in a rising flood upon practically all nations, this Supreme Sacred Congregation of the Holy Office, which is intrusted with the guardianship of faith and morals, does by apostolic authority and in the name of His Holiness, by Divine Providence Pope Pius XI, command all Ordinaries of places to strive by all means in their power to remedy so great and so urgent an evil.

"Certainly it is the part of those who have been placed by the Holy Ghost to rule the Church of God to exercise an alert and diligent watchfulness over everything that is printed and published in their dioceses. Everyone knows that books which nowadays are current all over the world are too numerous to be examined by the Holy See. Hence, Pius X of happy memory declared in his Motu Proprio, 'Sacrorum Antistitum': "Whatever books are current in your dioceses of such a nature as to be harmful to readers, make earnest efforts to get rid of them, even by solemn proscription. For although the Holy See is making every effort to get rid of such books, they have already grown so numerous that it is scarcely possible to examine them all. And so the remedy often comes too late, after the evil through long delay has grown inveterate."

"And yet the greater part of those volumes and booklets, although most pernicious, cannot be condemned by a special censure of this Supreme Congregation. hence, the Ordinaries, according to Canon 1397, paragraph 4, must, either by themselves or through the Council of Vigilance which the same Supreme Pontiff established by his Encyclical, Pascendi dominici gregis, constantly and earnestly strive to fulfill this most important duty; and they should not fail to denounce those books, as occasion offers, in their diocesan papers, as condemned and extremely harmful.

"Moreover, as everyone knows, the Church has already provided by general law that all books which are tainted with immorality, and which of set purpose or openly attack the integrity of morals, be regarded as forbidden just as if they had actually been placed on the Index of forbidden books. it follows that persons who without due permission read a book that is undoubtedly salacious, even though it is not condemned by name by the ecclesiastical authorities, commit a mortal sin. And since in this most important matter false and disastrous opinions are current among the faithful, Ordinaries of places must see to it that especially pastors and their assistants give attention to this matter and give the needed instruction to the people.

“Besides, the Ordinaries must not fail to declare openly according to the needs of their respective dioceses, what books by name are forbidden by the law itself. and if they think that they can more effectively or speedily protect the faithful from any particular book by condemning it by special decree, they must by all means make use of this power, just as the Holy See commonly does when grave reasons require it, according to Canon 1395, paragraph 1: "The right and duty of forbidding books for grave cause belongs not only to the supreme ecclesiastical authority for the universal Church, but also to particular Councils and Ordinaries of places, for their subjects." Finally, this Supreme Sacred Congregation orders all Archbishops, Bishops and other Ordinaries of places, on the occasion of their diocesan report, to make known to the Holy See what measures they have taken and put into execution against lascivious books. Holy Office, Instruction, 3 May, 1927.

Some of these warnings may be repetitious, but how many have repeatedly watched reruns of immoral television programs with giving it any thought. Better to repeat a warning, than to find that one has not been properly warned.

In his Encyclical, Immortale Dei of November 1, 1885, Pope Leo XIII states:

“So, too, the liberty of thinking, and of publishing, whatsoever one likes, without any hindrance, is not in itself an advantage over which society can wisely rejoice. On the contrary, it is the fountain-head and origin of many evils. Liberty is a power perfecting man, and hence should have truth and goodness for its object. But the character of goodness and truth cannot be changed at option. These remain ever one and the same, and are no less changeable than nature herself. If the mind assents to false opinions, and the will chooses and follows after what is wrong, neither can attain its native fullness, but both must fall from their native dignity into an abyss of corruption. Whatever, therefore, is opposed to virtue and truth, may not rightly be brought temptingly before the eye of man, must less sanctioned by the favour and protection of law. A well-spent life is the only passport to heaven, whither all are bound, and on this account the State is acting against the laws and dictates of nature whenever it permits license of opinion and of action to lead minds astray from truth, and souls away from the practice of virtue.

“On the question of the separation of the Church and State the same Pontiff (Gregory XVI) writes as follows: "Nor can we hope for happier results, either for religion or for the civil government, from the wishes of those who desire that the Church be separated from the State, and the concord between the secular and ecclesiastical authority be dissolved. It is clear that these men, who yearn for a shameless liberty, live in dread of an agreement which has always been fraught with good, and advantageous alike to sacred and civil interests."

“So, too, the liberty of thinking, and of publishing, whatsoever one likes, without any hindrance, is not in itself an advantage over which society can wisely rejoice. On the contrary, it is the fountain-head and origin of many evils.” This principle must always be in our minds. The license to do as one pleases, which is taught by Satanism (do what thou wilt) and his diabolical system is the road to hell. Since one may not publish or broadcast evil, one may not partake of it, when another publishes or broadcasts it. We are not free in this matter to follow our own will, but must conform to the Divine and Natural Laws, as well as to the prudent provisions of Ecclesiastical Law.”

In the Encyclical, Libertas Humana, of June 20, 1888, Pope Leo XIII writes:

“We must now consider briefly liberty of speech, and liberty of the press. It is hardly necessary to say that there can be no such right as this, if it be not used in moderation, and if it pass beyond the bounds and ends of all true liberty. For right is a moral power which-as We have before said and must again and again repeat-it is absurd to suppose that nature has accorded indifferently to truth and falsehood, to justice and injustice. Men have a right freely and prudently to propagate throughout the State what things soever are true and honorable, so that as many as possible may possess them; but lying opinions, than which no mental plague is greater, and vices which corrupt the heart and moral life should be diligently repressed by public authority, lest they insidiously work the ruin of the State. The excesses of an unbridled intellect, which unfailingly end in the oppression of the untutored multitude, are no less rightly controlled by the authority of the law than are the injuries inflicted by violence upon the weak. And this all the more surely, because by far the greater part of the community is either absolutely unable, or able only with great difficulty, to escape from illusions and deceitful subtleties, especially such as flatter the passions. If unbridled license of speech and of writing be granted to all, nothing will remain sacred and inviolate; even the highest and truest mandates of nature, justly held to be the common and noblest heritage of the human race, will not be spared. Thus, truth being gradually obscured by

darkness, pernicious and manifold error, as too often happens, will easily prevail. Thus, too, license will feign what liberty loses; for liberty will ever be more free and secure, in proportion as license is kept in fuller restraint. In regard, however, to any matters of opinion which God leaves to man's free discussion, full liberty of thought and speech is naturally within the right of every one; for such liberty never leads men to suppress truth, but often to discover it and make it known."

"But lying opinions, than which no mental plague is greater, and vices which corrupt the heart and moral life, should be diligently repressed by public authority lest they insidiously work the ruin of the State." Since the State has decided it wishes ruin and has refused to suppress the evil spewing forth on the air waves and in print, each member of the faithful must avoid lying opinions and vices which corrupt the heart, lest they come to personal ruin.

From Divine Contemplation For All

pages 104-6

On the other hand, the world, too, imposes a mighty deal of reading on its votaries: Periodicals without number-filled with deliberate lies, or suppressions of the truth, to suit the needs of political parties; with unwholesome, poisonous, vitriolic, hellish facts divers; faked history; with garbage literature of infinite variety, pandering to all the morbid appetites of an effete society and books of demi-science, with trumpery articles on all the branches of human speculation, creating the impression that man, puny man, has solved all the riddles of the universe, fathomed all the great deeps above his head and under his feet, and weighed God in the balance and found Him wanting! man, that thing of yesterday, whose body, to-morrow, rots in the grave, while his soul goes to its judgment!

From such mental seed what harvest can be expected but utter bewilderment, anarchy of thought, desperate materialism with its attendant evils? -A plentiful crop of these evils we see ripening under our eyes, promising a terrible reaping in the near future. The horrible world war (i) we have just gone through; the present labour unrest with its arrogant, unreasonable demands; Bolshevism rampant everywhere: what are these but the fruits of that precious so-called liberty of the Press? This is not liberty, but most unbridled license-license to utter, declaim, print, read, disseminate broadcast, without check or restraint, monstrous, immoral, blasphemous, subversive doctrines. A stronger social order than ours would soon suffer disintegration under such powerful dissolvents. As for the effect on the individual-it is simply frightful.

Do most people in our midst, now-a-days, know whether there is a God? or whether they have an immortal soul? or whether there is such a thing as moral responsibility? They are no longer quite sure of anything. They hold that it would be wrong for anyone to rob them or kill them: but it is not so clear to them that, for instance, adultery is a crime. One thing only looms big before their mental vision: they must have what they call "a good time"; they want to amuse themselves-and following out this simple programme, they proceed to make a hash of their lives. And under all their dissipation, there is a sadness bordering upon despair.

If a Christian dabbles in this sort of literature, he unfits himself for divine contemplation. If he must touch it, through no choice of his own, and under pressure of circumstances, he must surround himself with every sanitary precaution that prudence can suggest, otherwise he runs a mortal risk: he is like a man who would rashly handle poisonous gases, or powerful acids, without putting on a mask to protect his face, or gloves to save his hands.

There are those among the educated and wealthy who think that they cannot possibly find a place in the order of their day for holy reading. Let me tell them bluntly: You do not want to; you have no relish for it. That is the plain truth.

No time for holy reading! If those same unworthy Christians would write down an enumeration of all the items of newspapers, novels, and other frivolous reading they contrive to get into a week, they would be amazed at the quantity. Now it is simply a case of, Ceci tuera cela: this will kill that. Either holy reading or pernicious reading: it is clear that the two cannot thrive together: either holy reading and as its fruit, divine contemplation; or no holy reading at all, and, as a fatal consequence, no divine contemplation at all.

Bishop Hedley on Reading

From A Bishop and His Flock, 1903

Books and newspapers may be occasions of sin; immoral books; sensuous books; idle reading Precautions with regards to newspapers and books destructive of faith. Good books tend to give an adequate knowledge of our holy religion, and to instruct us in the spiritual life.

The printing press is one of the greatest of the forces of the modern world. Books and newspapers are not only beyond

all counting, but they are absolute necessities of life, even to the poorest; and they work more good and more mischief than armies and parliaments. It will not, therefore, be inopportune to say a few words about READING.

There are those who read too much, or with too little discretion and self-restraint; and there are those who neglect to read what they ought. Let us first speak of want of discretion in reading.

It stands to reason that if a book or a newspaper is an occasion of sin, it has to be given up or let alone. All Catholics are taught and no other doctrine can be reconciled with the Gospel of Jesus Christ that if a thing is sinful to do, it is sinful to expose oneself unnecessarily to a temptation to do it, and sinful to dwell upon it in the heart, with desire, or even with any kind of lingering consideration. This is especially true of all that regards anger, hatred, or impurity. With respect to theft, violence, murder, or impiety, it may be that most minds are able to hear about them, read about them, or think about them, without feeling any promptings to commit a sinful act. Even this, however, has large and numerous exceptions. There are plenty of foolish, inexperienced and roughly-educated boys and girls to whom descriptions of violence, blood, drunkenness, and riot, are exciting in a dangerous degree. Pictures of crime, of impossible heroes and heroines, of romantic marriages and tragic adventures, excite that curiosity, that restlessness and that strange desire to imitate, which are found in all human beings before time and sad experience have sobered them. But in matters relating to modesty and purity, there is far more danger; because the passions are, as a rule, much more easily stirred up in these things than in others which are against the laws of God and our nature. The duty, therefore, of all who fear God and would save their immortal souls, is perfectly clear. You cannot read about, dwell upon, or entertain in your heart and thought, any scene, description, sentiment, or feeling, which it would be wrong to put into act, or which urges and leads to sinful act. All such reading and indulgence of the imagination is sinful, either because they set up sinful thinking, or because they lead to sinful acts, or for both reasons.

Although these are elementary principles of Christian morality, it is by no means superfluous to state them and dwell upon them. The idea that there is no harm in thoughts and desires is not unknown, even among Catholics. It is not always easy to persuade those who are accustomed to the freedom of modern manners that it is sinful to dwell on immodest thoughts, or that it is a duty to restrain impure feelings, and to reject imaginations which defile the heart. The nature of man is such, that thoughts and suggestions of this kind, and of other kinds, are sure to trouble us as long as we live. But we are bound to use reasonable means to resist them; and, above all, we are bound to avoid those occasions which give rise to them, and never to expose our weakness to any temptation which it is in our power to avoid.

The occasions of sinful imagination which come through reading may not be absolutely the most dangerous; but they are so common and so easily found that they have a special danger of their own. There are many different kinds of evil reading. First, there are books which are absolutely obscene and immoral. All decent people are on their guard against these. They are only fit to be put in the fire. Yet they are multiplying amongst us. There is no need to say that all parents and responsible persons should quietly and carefully keep them out of the way of the young. It is true, no doubt, that no precaution or vigilance will prevent any one, young or old, from getting such books if he wishes. As to this, we can only trust to a careful bringing up, to the confessional, and to the grace of God. But care and watchfulness will do something, and will, at any rate, save innocent youth from stumbling unawares upon things that may prove their ruin in soul and body.

Next, there are the books which are not absolutely and grossly immoral, but which are sensual, soft, and suggestive. Of these it may be said that no one, as a rule, reads them except for sensual reasons. They are not generally masterpieces; but they gratify a morbid interest, and stimulate feelings which are never very far from sin. All stories or novels in which the passion of love is strongly and warmly depicted, come under this class. Such books are unhealthy to the last degree. They prematurely arouse, and unduly excite, what the spiritual soul can with difficulty control even under the most favourable circumstances. They sap all wholesomeness and manliness of character, and lead to selfishness, peevishness, and laziness. Such books as these lie about everywhere, and are read by rich and poor. Idle ladies read them; but so do business men, clerks, servants, and working people who thus not only do harm to them selves directly, but, by squandering their time, expose themselves to loss, and are tempted to dishonesty and neglect of duty. Catholics ought clearly to understand that because a book is openly sold, and read, and talked about, it is not therefore lawful to read. The rule of restraint, and the law of mortification, hold in this as in other things. It is far better to be behind our friends in our acquaintance with the talk of the hour, than to have our minds stained by doubtful reading. Innocence may be smiled at, but it is respected. Even if we have to endure ridicule, we shall be the happier for taking the side of God and of purity. Let us not be deluded by the talk which is now so common that the time has come for certain serious aspects of morality to be openly and plainly discussed. This is not the Christian rule or teaching. Such problems may and must be discussed, and as plainly as need be; but not by idle laymen, young women, or curious boys. Such topics require training, gravity, and circumspection. But the writers who are now setting the fashion of throwing them to the multitude care little, we may be sure, for the interests of truth or reformation, provided they can stir up unpleasant curiosity, and sell their books.

It may be said with truth that all idle reading is hurtful and bad. To read, for honest recreation, even silly books that are not otherwise objectionable, need not be condemned. But continuous idle reading of romantic, sentimental, or exciting narratives, spoils one's life and causes a general laziness and looseness in one's whole nature, unfitting the mind for exertion and the body for self-denial. The inordinate reading of newspapers should be avoided on similar grounds. There are all kinds

of newspapers and cheap periodicals good, bad, and indifferent. Catholics must remember that they are not to take the tone of their moral feelings from newspapers, but from the teaching and traditions of their holy religion. It cannot be denied that there is, on the whole, a very free and lax interpretation, on the part of the newspaper press, of that precept of St. Paul which prescribes that certain things should "not be so much as named " among Christians (Ephesians v. 3). Because a matter is reported in a newspaper, it by no means follows that it is right or proper for a Christian to read it, much less to dwell upon it, or to let it get into the hands of those for whom one is responsible. The standard of right and wrong in things of this kind is constantly in danger of being lowered. Our duty is, by precept and by example, to uphold and maintain it. It may not be possible for us to do much in purifying the periodical press although the disapproval of God-fearing readers is never without its effect but we may at least preserve our own conscience free from stain, and help many souls who otherwise would be carried away by the evil and corrupting tendencies of the age. Even when the newspaper is free from objection, it is easy to lose a great deal of time over it. It may be necessary or convenient to know what is going on in the world. But there can be no need of our absorbing all the rumours, all the guesses and gossip, all the petty incidents, all the innumerable paragraphs in which the solid news appears half drowned, like the houses and hedges when the floods are out. This is idle, and it is absolutely bad for brain and character. There is a kind of attraction towards petty and desultory reading of this kind which is sure to leave its mark on the present generation. The newspaper presents not only news, but ideas, reflections, views, inferences, and conclusions of every kind. As the reader takes in all this prepared and digested matter, he is deluded with the notion that he is thinking and exercising his mind. He is doing nothing of the kind. He is putting on another man's clothes, and fitting himself out with another man's ideas. To do this habitually is to live the life of a child; one is amused and occupied, and one is enabled to talk second-hand talk; but that is all. Men were better men, if they thought at all, in the days when there was less to read. It is pitiable to reflect how many there are, in all the ranks of life, who depend for ideas on the utterances of their newspapers. And who, after all, are the writers of newspapers? Men by no means specially endowed or qualified; men who have to write in a hurry, with little learning or training, on all kinds of subjects, some of them the most momentous; and men who have strong temptations to speak rashly and flippantly on all things connected with religion and morality. Immoderate newspaper reading leads, therefore, to much loss of time, and does no good, either to the mind or to the heart.

Books and periodicals which are calculated to weaken or pervert our religious faith are to be avoided, like immoral books. This is a duty which springs from the natural law, and is quite antecedent to any prohibition on the part of the Church. The Catholic should, therefore, refrain from reading anti-Catholic or anti-religious books. The arguments of such books may be, and probably have been, abundantly refuted. But the refutation is not always at hand, and it is not every reader who knows how to answer. There are in existence, unfortunately, at the present moment, many books of undoubted literary ability and interest which attack, generally in an indirect way, the existence of God, the divinity of our Lord, the Church, and man's moral responsibility. When the Catholic layman reads these productions, as he does far too freely, he is astonished and disturbed to find so strong a case made out against his faith. But why is he astonished and puzzled? It is generally because he knows so very little about his own religion. He has learnt his Catechism, perhaps, as a child, and has heard a sermon now and then; but the evidences, the explanations, and exposition of Christian doctrine have had little or no interest for him; and hence he is more or less at the mercy of the heretic and the sophist. It is evident that men and women of so little instruction have no right to expose themselves to the arguments of the enemy. And when they do come across such arguments, in their newspapers or general reading, they should know that it is chiefly their own ignorance that makes the difficulties seem so formidable. The Church, if she had her own way, would keep such writings out of the hands of her children. No book which is known to be prohibited should be read by any Catholic, at least without proper advice.

If bad and indiscreet reading is productive of much harm, there is no limit to the possibilities of spiritual profit which arise from good reading. A good book is a faithful teacher, a true and faithful friend, and a never-failing helper in the things that concern salvation. Few Catholics take a proper view of the usefulness and the advantage of being well instructed in their religion. If a man's mind and heart are to take hold of his religion and to keep hold of it, his religion must be, by some means or other, worked into his mind and heart. The mind has many faculties, and so has the heart and imagination. Therefore, to grasp one's holy faith firmly and lovingly one must reason about it, one must follow it to conclusions and results, one must view it in the varying lights of history, of science, and of society, one must survey it as it touches the world at a thousand points, and feel it as it ministers to the innumerable aspirations of one's own nature. This kind of instruction is begun in childhood, when the teacher and the priest at the altar first bring the young intelligence of the child and its dawning sensibility face to face with God, with Christ, and with the sacraments. But by the time the young man or woman takes up the work of life it cannot be more than begun. How can it be continued and extended? The answer is, chiefly by reading. The spoken instructions of the Church's ministers are most profitable, and priests in charge of souls endeavour to obey the holy Council of Trent and to mingle instruction with all their exhortations. But a book will go further, and make things more secure. Since in these days all, or nearly all, are able to read, and to read easily, there ought undoubtedly to be a great advance on the part of Catholics in the knowledge of religion by means of print. And, happily, it cannot be pretended that there is nothing to read. If we consider, for example, the list of the publications of the Catholic Truth Society, we find among them instructions of every kind: exposition of doctrine, controversy, history, biography, devotion, and moral and social papers, besides tales and verse. No one is too poor

to be able to afford the halfpenny or the penny which is the price of most of these brochures and leaflets; whilst there are books and larger pamphlets for those who look for something more extended, and the bound volumes of the series form a small library of the handiest and the most useful kind. For readers of greater education and leisure there are materials in abundance which it is unnecessary to specify at this moment. A catalogue of any of our London, Dublin, or New York Catholic publishers, will suggest to every one how many subjects there are on which it would be useful to be well-informed, and how much there is to be known in the grand and wide Kingdom of the holy Catholic faith. [42] No one can love Our Lord who does not know about Him, and no one can be truly loyal to the Church who does not take the trouble to study her.

If instruction is so deeply important, devotion and piety are not less so. With most of us, prayer is very short and very slight. There is one means which will both make us more regular in our daily prayer, and deepen our earnestness in that sacred duty. This is, Spiritual Reading. If our reading were merely instruction and information about God and divine things, our prayers would be all the better for it. To know more of the things of the Kingdom of Heaven is to walk abroad in the sunshine of a glorious universe whose very sight lifts us above the earth and inclines the heart to seek God. But when, in addition, we find in our book devout thoughts, pious aspirations, good advice, solid exhortation, and the example of the Saints, then the minutes of our prayer, which before seemed hard to fill up, overflow with the outpourings of a heart which all these things stimulate and inflame. No one should be without a book about Our Lord, His Sacred Heart, His blessed Mother, or the Saints. No one should be without a book on the Mass. Besides one's prayer-book, one should have manuals of meditation and of instruction on Christian virtues. More extended devotional treatises will keep alive the piety of those for whom they are suitable. But all Catholics, whatever their condition, should make use of Spiritual Reading. It is impossible to exaggerate the effect on the lives and characters of Christians of the words of holy men, of the heroic acts of the martyrs, of the example of the lovers of Jesus in every age, of the contemplation of Our Lady's prerogatives and goodness, and above all of the story of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The "Following of Christ," the "Spiritual Combat," the "Devout Life" of St. Francis de Sales, and other books of a like nature, are at once a guide to virtue, an encouragement to prayer, and an influence drawing the heart daily nearer to God. The reading of Holy Scripture, of the sermons and conferences of distinguished preachers, and of the penetrating devotional books in which our language is by no means deficient, is adapted to sanctify the house, and to keep out of it, to a greater or less degree, that flood of objectionable printed matter which overflows the land at the present moment. Priests and laity cannot do more for souls than to encourage by every means in their power good and cheap Catholic literature instruction, devotion, tales, and periodicals and to bring it within the reach of every class of the faithful. All read; they must read, and they will read. Let us strive to check the evils of bad reading by the dissemination of that which is good.

Bad Books

from The Sinner's Return to God, by Michael Muller

The foregoing chapter has been devoted to showing the necessity of avoiding the proximate occasion of sin. There is one special occasion of sin which must be dwelt upon more at length. It is the reading of bad books. Bad books are, 1, idle, useless books which do no good, but distract the mind from what is good; 2. Many novels and romances which do not appear to be so bad, but often are bad; 3. Books which treat professedly of bad subjects; 4. Bad newspapers, journals, miscellanies, sensational magazines, weeklies, illustrated papers, medical works; 5. Superstitious books, books of fate, etc.; 6. Protestant and infidel books and tracts.

There are certain idle, useless books which, though not bad in themselves, are pernicious because they cause the reader to lose the time which he might and ought to spend in occupations more beneficial to his soul. He who has spent much time in reading such books, and then goes to prayer, to Mass, and to Holy Communion, instead of thinking of God and of making acts of love and confidence, will be constantly troubled with distractions; for the representations of all the vanities he has read will be constantly present to his mind.

The mill grinds the corn which it receives. If the wheat be bad, how can the mill turn out good flour? How is it possible to think often of God, and offer to Him frequent acts of love, of oblation, of petition, and the like, if the mind is constantly filled with the trash read in idle, useless books? In his letter to his disciple Eustochium, St. Jerome stated for her instruction that in his solitude at Bethlehem he was attached to, and frequently read, the works of Cicero, and that he felt a certain disgust for pious books because their style was not polished. Almighty God, foreseeing the harm of this profane reading, and that without the aid of holy books the saint would never reach that height of sanctity for which he was destined, administered a remedy very harsh, no doubt, but well calculated to make him alive to his fault. He sent a grievous sickness on him, which soon brought the solitary to the brink of the grave. As he was lying at the point of death, God called him in spirit before His tribunal. The saint, being there, heard the Judge ask him who he was. He answered unhesitatingly, "I am a Christian; I hold no other faith than Thine, my Lord, my Judge." "Thou liest," said the Judge; "thou art a Ciceronian, for where thy treasure is, there thy heart is also." He then ordered him to be severely scourged. The servant of God shrieked with pain as he felt the blows, and begged for

mercy, repeating in a loud voice, "Have mercy upon me, O Lord! have mercy upon me." Meanwhile, they who stood round the throne of that angry Judge, falling on their faces before Him, began to plead in behalf of the culprit, implored mercy for him, and promised in his name that his fault should be corrected. Then St. Jerome, who, smarting with pain from the hard strokes he had received, would gladly have promised much greater things, began to promise and to swear, with all the ardor of his soul, that never again would he open profane; and worldly works, but that he would read pious, edifying books. As he uttered these words he returned to his senses, to the amazement of the bystanders, who had believed him to be already dead. St. Jerome concludes the narration of this sad history with these words: "Let no one fancy that it was an idle dream, like to those which come to deceive our minds in the dead of night. I call to witness the dread tribunal before which I lay prostrate, that it was no dream, but a true representation of a real occurrence; for when I returned to myself, found my eyes swimming with tears, and my shoulders livid and bruised with those cruel blows." He tells us, finally, that after this warning he devoted himself to the reading of pious books with the same diligence and zeal that he had before bestowed upon the works of profane writers. It was thus that Almighty God induced him to that study of divine things which was so essential to his own progress in perfection, and destined to do so much good to the whole Christian world.

It is true that in works like those of Cicero we sometimes find useful sentiments; but the same St. Jerome wisely said in a letter to another disciple: "What need have you of seeking for a little gold in the midst of so much dross, when you can read pious books in which you shall find all gold without any dross?"

As to novels, they are, in general, pictures, and usually very highly wrought pictures, of human passions. Passion is represented as working out its ends successfully, and attaining its objects even by the sacrifice of duty. These books, as a class, present false views of life; and as it is the error of the young to mistake these for realities, they become the dupes of their own ardent and enthusiastic imaginations, which, instead of trying to control, they actually nourish with the poisonous food of phantoms and chimeras.

When the thirst for novel-reading has become insatiable-as with indulgence it is sure to do-they come at last to live in an unreal fairy-land, amidst absurd heroes and heroines of their own creation, thus unfitting themselves for the discharge of the common duties of this every-day world, and for association with every-day mortals. The more strongly works of fiction appeal to the imagination, and the wider the field they afford for its exercise, the greater in general are their perilous attractions; and it is but too true that they cast, at last, a sort of spell over the mind, so completely fascinating the attention that duty is forgotten and positive obligation laid aside to gratify the desire of unravelling, to its last intricacy, the finely-spun web of some airy creation of fancy. Fictitious feelings are excited, unreal sympathies aroused, unmeaning sensibilities evoked. The mind is weakened; it has lost that laudable thirst after truth which God has imprinted on it; filled with a baneful love of trifles, vanity, and folly, it has no taste for serious reading and profitable occupations; all relish for prayer, for the Word of God, for the reception of the sacraments, is lost; and, at last, conscience and common sense give place to the dominion of unchecked imagination. Such reading, instead of forming the heart, depraves it. It poisons the morals and excites the passions; it changes all the good inclinations a person has received from nature and a virtuous education; it chills by little and little pious desires, and in a short time banishes out of the soul all that was there of solidity and virtue. By such reading, young girls on a sudden lose a habit of reservedness and modesty, take an air of vanity and frivolity, and make show of no other ardor than for those things which the world esteems and which God abominates. They espouse the maxims, spirit, conduct, and language of the passions which are there under various disguises artfully instilled into their minds; and, what is most dangerous, they cloak all this irregularity with the appearances of civility and an easy, complying, gay humor and disposition.

St. Teresa, who fell into this dangerous snare of reading idle books, writes thus of herself: "This fault failed not to cool my good desires, and was the cause of my falling insensibly into other defects. I was so enchanted with the extreme pleasure I took herein that I thought I could not be content if I had not some new romance in my hands. I began to imitate the mode, to take delight in being well dressed, to take great care of my hands, to make use of perfumes, and to affect all the vain trimmings which my condition admitted. Indeed, my intention was not bad, for I would not for the world, in the immoderate passion which I had to be decent, give anyone an occasion of offending God; but I now acknowledge how far these things, which for several years appeared to me innocent, are effectually and really criminal."

Criminal and dangerous, therefore, is the disposition of those who fritter away their time in reading such books as fill the mind with a worldly spirit, with a love of vanity, pleasure, idleness, and trifling; which destroy and lay waste all the generous sentiments of virtue in the heart, and sow there the seeds of every vice. Who seeks nourishment from poisons? Our thoughts and reflection are to the mind what food is to the body; for by them the affections of the soul are nourished. The chameleon changes its color as it is affected by pain, anger, or pleasure, or by the color upon which it sits; and we see an insect borrow its lustre and hue from the plant or leaf upon which it feeds. In like manner, what our meditations and affections are, such will our souls become-either holy and spiritual or earthly and carnal.

In addition to their other dangers, many of these books unfortunately teem with maxims subversive of faith in the truths of religion. The current popular literature in our day is penetrated with the spirit of licentiousness, from the pretentious quarterly to the arrogant and flippant daily newspaper, and the weekly and monthly publications are mostly heathen or maudlin. They express and inculcate, on the one hand, stoical, cold, and polished pride of mere intellect, or, on the other, empty and

wretched sentimentality. Some employ the skill of the engraver to caricature the institutions and offices of the Christian religion, and others to exhibit the grossest forms of vice and the most distressing scenes of crime and suffering. The illustrated press has become to us what the amphitheatre was to the Romans when men were slain, women were outraged, and Christians given to the lions to please a degenerate populace. "The slime of the serpent is over it all." It instills the deadly poison of irreligion and immorality through every pore of the reader. The fatal miasma floats in the whole literary atmosphere, is drawn ill with every literary breath, corrupting the very life-blood of religion in the mind and soul. Thus it frequently happens that the habitual perusal of such books soon banishes faith from the soul, and in its stead introduces infidelity. He who often reads bad books will soon be filled with the spirit of the author who wrote them. The first author of pious books is the Spirit of God; but the author of bad books is the devil, who artfully conceals from certain persons the poison which such works contain. Written, as they generally are in a most attractive, flowery style, the reader becomes enchanted, as it were, by their perusal, not suspecting the poison that lies hidden under that beautiful style, and which he drinks as he reads on.

But it is objected the book is not so bad. Of what do bad books treat? What religion do they teach? Many of them teach either deism, atheism, or pantheism? Others ridicule our holy religion and everything that is sacred. What morals do these books teach? The most lewd. Vice and crime are deified; monsters of humanity are held out as true heroes. Some of these books speak openly and shamelessly of the most obscene things, whilst others do so secretly, hiding their poison under a flowery style. They are only the more dangerous because their poisonous contents enter the heart unawares.

A person was very sorry to see that a certain bad book was doing so much harm. He thought he would read it, that he might be better able to speak against it. With this object in view he read the book. The end of it was that instead of helping others he ruined himself.

Some say, "I read bad books on account of the style. I wish to improve my own style. I wish to learn something of the world." This is no sufficient reason for reading such books. The good style of a book does not make its poisonous contents harmless. A fine dress may cover a deformed body, but it cannot take away its deformity. Poisonous serpents and flowers may be very beautiful, but for all that they are not the less poisonous. To say that such books are read purely because of their style is not true, because those who allege this as an excuse sometimes read novels which are written in a bad style. There are plenty of good books, written in excellent style, which are sadly neglected by these lovers of pure English.

To consult those books for a knowledge of the world is another common excuse for their perusal. Well, where shall we find an example of one who became a deeper thinker, a more eloquent speaker, a more expert business man, by reading novels and bad books? They only teach how to sin, as Satan taught Adam and Eve to eat of the forbidden tree, under the pretence of attaining real knowledge; and the result was loss of innocence, peace, and Paradise, and the punishment of the human race through all time.

Some profess to skip the bad portions and read only the good. But how are they to know which are the bad portions unless they read them? The pretext is a false one. He only will leave the bad who hates it. But he who hates the bad things will not read the books at all, unless he be obliged to do so; and no one is obliged to read them, for there are plenty of good, profitable, and entertaining books which can be read without danger.

There is a class of readers who flatter themselves that bad books may hurt others, but not them; they make no impression on them. Happy and superior mortals! Are they gifted with hearts of stone, or of flesh and blood? Have they no passions? Why should these books hurt others and not them? Is it because they are more virtuous than others? Is it not true that the bad, obscene parts of the story remain more vividly and deeply impressed upon their minds than those which are more or less harmless? Did not the perusal of these books sometimes cause those imaginations and desires forbidden by Christian modesty? Did they not sometimes accuse themselves in confession of having read them? If not, they ought to have done so. Who would like to die with such a book in their hand? Readers of bad books who say such reading does not affect them should examine themselves and see whether they are not blinded by their passions, or so far gone in crime that, like an addled egg, they cannot become more corrupt than they already are.

See that infamous young man, that corrupter of innocence. What is the first step often of a young reprobate who wishes to corrupt some poor, innocent girl? He first lends her a bad book. He believes that if she reads that book she is lost. A bad book, as he knows, is an agreeable corrupter; for it veils vice under a veil of flowers. It is a shameless corrupter. The most licentious would blush, would hesitate to speak the language that their eyes feed on. But a bad book does not blush, feels no shame, no hesitation. Itself unmoved and silent, it places before the heart and imagination the most shameful obscenities.

A bad book is a corrupter to whom the reader listens without shame, because it can be read alone and taken up when one pleases.

Go to the hospitals and brothels; ask that young man who is dying of a shameful disease; ask that young woman who has lost her honor and her happiness; go to the dark grave of the suicide; ask them what was the first step in their downward career, and they will answer, the reading of bad books.

Not long ago a young lady from Poughkeepsie, N. Y., who was once a good Catholic, began to read novels. Not long after she wished to imitate what she read, and to become a great lady. So she left her comfortable home, and ran away with another young lady to New York. There she changed her name, became a drunkard and a harlot, and even went so far in her

wickedness as to kill a policeman. Here is the story, told in the woman's own words as given in the public press:

Fanny Wright, the woman who killed police officer McChesney, in New York, on the night of November 2, has been removed to the Tombs, and now occupies a cell in the upper tier of the female prison. The clothing stained with blood of her victim, which she has worn since her arrest, has been changed. In reply to interrogations she made the following statements respecting her life:

"About ten years ago I was living happily with my parents at Poughkeepsie, in this State. Nothing that I wished for was withheld. I was trained in the Roman Catholic faith, and attended to my religious duties with carefulness and pleasure until I was corrupted by a young girl of the same age, who was my school-fellow. She had been reading novels to such an extent that her head had become fairly upset, and nothing would do her but to travel and see the world. The dull life of a small country place like Poughkeepsie would not suit her tastes and inclinations, and from repeatedly whispering into my ears and persuading me that we would be great ladies, have horses, carriages, diamonds, and servants of our own, I finally reluctantly consented to flee from home, and we started together one beautiful night for the city of New York. [Here the poor woman gave way to tears, and sobbed hysterically.] On our arrival in this city we took up our quarters with Mrs. Adams, at No. 87 Leonard Street, and this was the place where I lost my virtue and commenced to lead a life of bitter, bitter shame. My family ultimately succeeded in finding out my whereabouts and took me home, but I could not listen to the voice of reason. I felt that I had selected my mode of life, and was determined at all hazards to follow it out. I escaped a second time, and went back to Mrs. Adams's, where I was confined of a sweet little girl shortly afterwards. I used to keep myself very clean, and dressed with great care and tastefulness. From Mrs. Adams's I moved to Mrs. Willoughby's, at No. 101 Mercer Street, and lived there until the death of my little girl, three years ago; that had an awful effect upon me; I could not help taking to drink to drown my sorrow. From this period I date the commencement of my real hardships. My father emigrated to California, and I had no one left but a young brother; he tried to reform me, and also his poor wife; God bless her! she used to cry herself sick at my disgrace. Previous to this the young girl who accompanied me from home in the first instance fell out lucky, and got married. Drinking was the only pleasure of my life, and it was not long until it began to have its results; I was arrested and committed to the Island for six months; I got down before my time was up, and again took to liquor and street-walking. I used to walk all the time between Greene, Wooster, and Mercer Streets, in the Eighth Ward. I was soon arrested the second time, and sent up again for six months. During the last three years of my life, I have been sent on the Island six times altogether for drunkenness and disorderly conduct. On the night the officer was killed [here she gave way again to tears, and rocked herself around on the bed in a fearful manner], I was walking through the street, going home with a message, and picking the kernels out of a hickory-nut with a small knife, when the officer came up to me; I was almost drunk at the time, and much excited; I did not know what I was doing, when on the impulse of the moment I struck him with the knife and I killed him." On Tuesday the brother of Fanny, a respectable young man, residing in the neighborhood of Poughkeepsie, called at the prison and had an interview with his sister.

A more affecting scene, says the Express it has seldom been our lot to witness. Although a strong, robust man, he fairly shook with emotion from his keen sense of grief and shame. He remained with her for nearly an hour. She was almost frantic with violent outbursts of grief, and after his departure became insensible.

Another young lady of the State of New York was sent to a convent school, where she received a brilliant education. She spoke seven languages. She wished to enter a convent, but was prevented by her parents. Her parents died, and after their death the young lady took to novel-reading. She soon wished to imitate what she had read; she wished to become a heroine. So she went upon the stage and danced in the "Black Crook." At last she fell one day on Second Avenue, in New York, and broke her leg in six places. She was taken to a hospital, where a good lady gave her a prayer-book. But she flung it away and asked for a novel. She would not listen to the priest encouraging her to make her confession and be reconciled to God. She died impenitent, with a novel in her hand.

Assuredly, if we are bound by every principle of our religion to avoid bad company, we are equally bound to avoid bad books; for of all evil, corrupting company, the worst is a bad book. There can be no doubt that the most pernicious influences at work in the world at this moment come from bad books and bad newspapers. The yellow-covered literature, as it is called, is a pestilence compared with which the yellow fever, and cholera, and small-pox are as nothing, and yet there is no quarantine against it. Never take a book into your hands which you would not be seen reading. Avoid not only notoriously immoral books and papers, but avoid also all those miserable sensational magazines and novels and illustrated papers which are so profusely scattered around on every side. The demand which exists for such garbage speaks badly for the moral sense and intellectual training of those who read them. If you wish to keep your mind pure and your soul in the grace of God, you must make it so firm and steady principle of conduct never to touch them.

Would you be willing to pay a man for poisoning your food? And why should you be fool enough to pay the authors and publishers of bad books and pamphlets, magazines, and the editors of irreligious newspapers for poisoning your soul with their impious principles and their shameful stories and pictures?

Go, then, and burn all bad books in your possession, even if they do not belong to you, even if they are costly. Two boys in New York bought a bad picture with their pocket-money, and burned it. A young man in Augusta, Ga., spent twenty dollars in buying up bad books and papers to burn them all. A modern traveller tells us that when he came to Evora, he there on

Sunday morning conversed with a girl in the kitchen of the inn. He examined some of her books which she showed him, and told her that one of them was written by an infidel, whose sole aim was to bring all religion into contempt. She made no reply to this, but, going into another room, returned with her apron full of dry sticks, all of which she piled upon the fire and produced a blaze. She then took that bad book and placed it upon the flaming pile; then, sitting down, she took her rosary out of her pocket, and told her beads until the book was entirely burnt up.

In the Acts of the Apostles we read that when St. Paul preached at Ephesus, many of the Jews and Gentiles were converted to the faith. "And many of them that believed came confessing and declaring their deeds. And many of those who had followed curious arts brought together their books and burnt them before all. And counting the price of them, they found the money to be fifty thousand pieces of silver."

A young nobleman who was on a sea voyage began to read an obscene book in which he took much pleasure. A religious priest, on noticing it, said to him: "Are you disposed to make a present to Our Blessed Lady?" The young man replied that he was. "Well," said the priest, "I wish that, for the love of the most holy Virgin, you would give up that book and throw it into the sea." "Here it is, father," answered the young man. "No," replied the priest, "you must yourself make this present to Mary." He did so at once. Mary was not slow in rewarding the nobleman for the great promptness with which he cast the bad book into the sea; for no sooner had he returned to Genoa, his native place, than the Mother of God so inflamed his heart with divine love that he entered a religious order.

Bad Reading

From Theory and Practice of the Confessional

The reading of bad books is a source of great danger, and this occasion of sin is very common, unceasingly estranging countless numbers from faith and robbing them of innocence.

We must distinguish between: (1) books which, ex professo, (avowedly) are written against religion and faith (defending the errors of heretics and infidels) and those which are not, ex professo, directed against it (only here and there attacking religion); (2) books which, ex professo, are obscene (which, if not wholly, yet to a great extent, treat of obscene things) and such as are subobsceni (in which a good deal of obscenity is to be found) .

Books ex professo impii (avowedly impious) are very dangerous and pernicious.

Few persons who are not learned and pious theologians can read them without injury to their faith. Hence the Church (in the second rule of the Index) has strictly prohibited the reading of such books, and if they haeresim propugnant, (promote heresy) reading them consciously entails censure of excommunication reserved to the Pope. [\[43\]](#) Books which are hostile to religion, but not so ex professo, are also a source of danger, and, therefore, reading them is permitted to no one without necessity. The degree of the danger depends upon the object which the reader has in view, upon his age, his religious sentiments, and knowledge.

Books ex professo obscene are certainly dangerous, for they excite violent temptations, and they are still worse when, as is often the case, they are illustrated with obscene pictures. Reading such is strictly forbidden by the seventh rule of the Index.

The libri erotici (de amoribus agentes), (erotic books) for instance many comedies, tragedies, dramas, novels, and romances, are sources of relative danger; the reading of them is, in many respects, injurious, especially to young people.

Bad newspapers and periodicals must be classified in the same way as books, and what has been said above concerning the reading of bad books holds good as to newspapers and periodicals. If they are written ex professo against faith and morals, they are even more dangerous than such books.

Accordingly, the confessor is bound: (1) when there is ground for suspicion that the penitent has sinned by such reading and has been silent about it, to ask him on the matter; omitting to do so would be very injurious to the penitent, as it would be leaving him in great danger, and if he had purposely concealed it, he would have confessed sacrilegiously.

The confessor is bound (2) to admonish penitents who have read bad books, etc., to refrain entirely from such reading, to buy no more books, etc., of the kind, not to borrow them, nor in future to have them in their possession. He must especially instruct parents and superiors on this head, and incite them to watchfulness. He is bound (3) to refuse absolution to those who will not refrain from such reading. [\[44\]](#) (4) To prescribe for the penitent who reads infidel writings ex necessitate suitable safe guards in order that the poison may not injure him, such remedies as reading good books and newspapers, praying for the preservation of faith, frequent reception of the Sacraments, etc. (5) To do his best to keep young people from novel reading. [\[45\]](#)

The confessor must, to the best of his ability, endeavor to prevent the reading of so-called "liberal" books, newspapers, and periodicals, which are, indeed, bad, though not, ex professo, godless or obscene; especially (a) when the penitent is

conscious of his duty to refrain from such reading, or is in doubt about it; (b) when, although not aware of this duty, good results are to be expected from exhortation; and (c) when the confessor perceives that such reading is beginning to harm the penitent. On the other hand, the confessor must be silent concerning the duty of avoiding such reading (a) when the penitent is invincibiliter (invincibly) [46] ignorant of this duty; (6) when the confessor could not hope that his admonition would be acted upon, or when, on the contrary, he would have to fear still greater evils; but he must then inspire his penitent with distrust of these newspapers, etc., and endeavor by exhortation and request to wean him from such dangerous reading. [47] A man of business might be permitted to keep and to read bad newspapers on account of the advertisements, when such advertisements are not to be found (or not so fully) in a good paper, but he must be admonished to subscribe for this end only, and not to leave the newspaper about for others, especially children, to read. It is not allowed to inn-keepers to have bad newspapers in their establishments in order to attract customers by such reading, for that would be an *actio ex se ordinata ad malum*. (an action of itself evil.) Under the heading of "bad newspapers" are not included those producing here and there incorrect judgments upon religion. [48]

The Reading of Bad Books

From Sermon Matter by Fr. Ferreol Girardey

1. We often hear these and similar assertions: "We live in an enlightened age. The human mind is progressive and should be emancipated from all ancient, obsolete, undue restrictions, for it is now fully able to judge for itself. Liberty of thought, liberty of speech, liberty of the press, is the offspring of modern civilisation. I read both sides, the pro and the con, so that I may not remain behind the age, but may keep up with the times, with modern progress. I am free to read what I like. I am old enough to know what is good and what is bad for me. I am well qualified to judge for myself. I am my own master; it is nobody's business what I read. I need relaxation; I can not always work or pray." Well, how much do you pray?

"I read out of curiosity, to be up-to-date in everything." But why read such stuff?

"I read to acquire a knowledge of mankind,." But fiction, being fiction and not reality, can give you only a fictitious knowledge of men.

"I read those books on account of their fine style." You are like a man who likes a good cake and, seeing a number of fine cakes immersed in the mire, picks them up and eats them!

"I read those books to acquire a fine style." What profit has your style derived from such filthy and erroneous matter? I suppose you thought more of gratifying your morbid curiosity in reading such trash than of analyzing its style and trying to conform yours to it. And even if you derived any profit therefrom for your style, it was at too great an expense, for it cost you your lively faith, your innocence, your virtue; irreparable expenses for you.

"Religious and pious books are dry and poorly written." Where did you find that out? Surely not from reading many of them.

"I read those books to drive away the blues, to drown my troubles." And with what success? Tell me candidly, whether it would not be better and more consoling and satisfactory for you to say a few prayers, to visit our divine Saviour in the Sacrament of His love, to bear your troubles for the love of Jesus crucified. Try it and you will be astonished at the good results.

"I know my religion; the books I read can do me no harm." We shall now see that you are mistaken.

2. Bad books, bad pamphlets, bad papers are one of the greatest scourges of religion, of morality, of society itself. Reading is food for the mind. Our mind or reason is the guide of our will, of our conduct. Bad reading of every kind poisons the mind. "The just man liveth by faith" (Rom. I. 17). But bad books destroy the reader's faith, either directly or indirectly; directly, if they treat of theological or philosophical subjects, for they fill the mind with false principles; indirectly, if they sap true morality, like a large number of novels, because they corrupt the reader's morals, and corruption of morals destroys first the reader's practical faith and gradually his theoretical faith, that is his belief in the doctrines of faith. Let us bear in mind that in this life we have nothing greater, nothing more precious than the gift of faith, for "without faith it is impossible to please God" (Hebr. n. 6), and save our soul (Mark 16. 16). Bad books are the scourge of morality, for religion is the basis of morality; there is no such a thing as morality without God honored as supreme Lawgiver, and therefore no morality without religion, for it alone teaches us to give due honor to God. Bad books are the scourge of society, for the basis of human society is necessarily morality and religion, as even the pagans of old admitted. Therefore bad books, by undermining religion, undermine all morality and the welfare and permanence of society. Bad books are the scourge of the family. The family is the result of marriage, which should necessarily be holy and indissoluble. The children owe their parents respect, obedience and love. But what do bad books teach? They teach that marriage is a mere contract, and therefore dissoluble; that it is not holy, but only a means of gratifying the passions, of promoting temporal interests; they deal in adultery which they call gallantry, praise divorce as a progress of civilisation, free love as a want of nature; they decry virtue and piety as chimeras, as hypocrisy, bigotry, and modesty and purity as a weakness, as contrary to nature; and ridicule the parents who require subordination and moral behavior from their children.

3. The usual effects of the passionate reading of works of fiction, on account of their sentimental style, their pictures of profane, passionate love, of the love of the sensual man, their making the gratification of the passions the highest possible enjoyment. All this tends to crush out heroic virtue, all true manliness, and leads, first, to loss of innocence and corruption of heart; the heart once corrupt the reader soon becomes disgusted with all serious reading, such as history, religious books; then follows gradual loss of faith, disinclination to honest labor, to the practice of the domestic virtues, a sort of frenzy for pleasure and romantic adventures, indifference to reputation, loss of bodily and mental health, and finally disgust for everything and even for life; and for many the end is suicide! [\[49\]](#)

4. Tell me what you read, and I will tell you what you think, what you believe, and what you feel, for bad reading ruins both the soul and the body. The eye reads, the memory retains, the imagination represents, the sensuality is excited, the reason is led astray, and the will follows the reason. Hence, in the first place, the loss of faith results from reading books that misrepresent the Catholic faith, its doctrines and practices and the clergy. Secondly, the passionate reading of novels and the like results, as we have just seen, in the loss of purity and modesty and in its consequences. Bad reading does not at once end in the loss of faith and innocence; nor does it usually at first make a bad impression on the reader, but awakens his curiosity and urges him on to continue the reading. It is like the battering-ram of the ancient Romans. By means of repeated blows of this engine of war against the thickest and strongest walls of a city, the walls would be battered down in the course of time, and thus the Roman army could enter through the breach and capture the city. In like manner, by repeatedly reading bad and dangerous books the virtue and faith of the reader will soon be battered down and unbelief and vice will find an unobstructed entrance into the mind and heart of the reader. Thirdly, experience proves that the passionate reading of works of fiction is injurious to the nervous system of the young, induces insomnia, and renders them unfit for domestic life, and not unfrequently leads to sinful habits, to insanity, and even to suicide.

5. The habit of novel reading by instilling into the mind fictitious ideas of real life, of the family, leads in contracting marriage to disobey the laws of the Church and even the laws of sound, common sense, for fiction deprives marriage of its very object, of its dignity, and banishes all really good motives for contracting it; therefore, such readers usually contract unhappy marriages, and, when married, do not rear their children, so as to secure either their temporal or eternal welfare!

6. The reading of bad books is very injurious to the Church. Such books declaim against and ridicule virginity, modesty, piety, self-denial, penance, humility and other virtues and laud pride, ambition, dangerous and sinful pleasures, the gratification of sensuality. They teach that it matters not what one believes, provided he is honest, that it is unmanly to submit one's reason to the teachings of the Church, and that every one is free to judge for himself in all matters whatever. In a word, such books so abound in false principles, that their readers are gradually led into unbelief and even into hatred of the Church and her teaching.

7. Bad books are most hurtful to the state. By their false teaching concerning marriage they undermine the family, and do great injury to the state for the family is the basis of society, since society, or the state, is composed of families and is perpetuated only by its families. They teach not only the lawfulness of divorce, but go so far as to make it appear advisable and even necessary, and thus aim at the destruction of society. Moreover, they advocate and spread the false principles of secret societies, which are subversive of all order and authority, and are filled with the praises of men whose lives were filled with immoral and scandalous practices.

8. Bad books are hurtful to all readers. Three things are required to produce a bad effect: 1, a thing that is bad or injurious in itself; 2, a thing that is liable to be injured; 3, the union of both together. The principles taught by the authors of bad books undermine the faith; their descriptions have an immoral tendency, and their style is usually fascinating, blinding and seductive. The reader's faith lacks firmness, his virtue is inconstant and easily ruined, and he is easily impressed, enticed and led away by descriptions of things or events that appeal to his passions. Hence such readers will be carried away by the reading of bad books either to infidelity or immorality, or rather to the loss of both their innocence and their faith. Those whose faith and virtue are firm and constant, never read bad books, for they abhor them. The readers of bad books are not angels, but have strong and unsubdued passions; they are not well grounded in their faith, for they have only a confused idea of what it teaches; hence they are both morally and mentally unfit to withstand the bad effects of such reading.

9. CURE FOR BAD READING. In the first place, you must put away, or rather destroy such books, as the Christians at Ephesus did in the time of St. Paul : "Many of them who had followed curious arts, brought together their books, and burnt them before all; and counting the price of them, they found the money to be fifty thousand pieces of silver" (Acts 19. 19). How dare you keep what you should not read, and give occasion to others to read such books! You have no right to give away, to sell, to lend, to borrow or praise such books! This obliges you under pain of mortal sin! A pagan author, Valerius Maximus, says of a certain pagan nation: "They would not suffer the minds of their children to be imbued with such books, lest they should do greater harm to their morals than afford benefit to their minds." The infidel Diderot, the writer of so many bad books, seeing one day his daughter reading one of his own books, snatched it out of her hands and cast it into the fire, for, although he wrote books to corrupt the faith and morals of others, he did not wish to have his own daughter's faith and morals corrupted! He also took great care of her religious education and was accustomed to teach her the catechism regularly. The great infidel, Jean Jacques Rousseau, who by his writings ruined the faith and morals of his cotemporaries and prepared the way for the French

Revolution, was corrupted at the age of seven years by reading the novels left by his late deceased mother! On the other hand, what wonderful conversions have been wrought through the reading of good books! St. Augustine, who was converted by reading the life of St. Paul, the first hermit, mentions two courtiers of the Roman emperor who were converted by reading the life of the Abbot St. Antony of Egypt. St. Columban was converted by reading the life of St. Mary of Egypt, the penitent; and St. Ignatius by reading the Lives of the Saints. Good books instruct the ignorant, admonish the slothful, stir up the indifferent, stimulate the careless, correct the erring, and raise up the fallen! You should have in your homes a number of good Catholic books, and read them at least on Sundays. You should support the Catholic press by subscribing to some Catholic Magazine and to at least one Catholic paper. "The best and most intelligent Catholics," says the New Mission Book, "are usually those who read good Catholic books and papers. They take an interest in their faith; they know and appreciate it; they are also able to explain and defend it and they are always to be relied on when there is question of making sacrifices to maintain and spread their holy faith."

Additional Thoughts on the Same Subject

First of all we should read from a good spiritual book every day for a half an hour. Limiting this to Sundays is certainly not sufficient in these days of the Great Apostasy.

1. No one would like to taste poison to see how it tastes. In like manner, no one should read a bad book out of mere curiosity about its contents.
2. St. Bernard says : "Vain reading begets vain thoughts." Bad reading, therefore, begets evil thoughts.
3. St. Augustine says : "By bad reading we do not acquire eloquence nor a fine style, but become vicious thereby, and learn to know evil without abhorring it, to speak of it without shame, to commit it without restraint."
4. St. Jerome says : "Is it necessary for thee to plunge into the mire to pick up a bit of gold ore, when thou canst get a quantity of it elsewhere?"
5. St. Thomas says: "The reading of profane books, so pleasant to worldlings, corrupts the morals of the young, leads men to worldliness, sensual love and vice."
6. The Board of health makes strict regulations to prevent the spread of contagious diseases; in like manner, it is the duty of the Church to prevent the spreading of unbelief and vice among her children.
7. A fine style in a bad book is like a magnificent dress worn by a harlot.
8. Would you drink a delicious and sweet beverage mingled with a deadly poison?
9. No sane man would seek a healthy plant in a field of poisonous weeds.
10. "It is God who speaks to us, when we read a good book," says St. Jerome.
11. "Vain reading," says St. Bonaventure, "begets vain thoughts, and extinguishes devotion."

Conclusion

Saint Ambrose writes: “I am of the opinion that one should not only avoid frequent plays, but all plays.” [\[50\]](#) A strong argument has just been made in favor of the total elimination of television in the lives of Catholics. That Catholics must live differently from the rest of the world is without question.

Saint Paul says:

“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercy of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, pleasing unto God your reasonable service. And be not conformed to this world: but be reformed in the newness of your mind, that you may prove what is the good and the acceptable and the perfect will of God.” [\[51\]](#)

The world praises television and endeavors to get televisions in the hands of all. The world thinks that only a freak or a crazy person does not have a television. Saint Paul tells us that we must be fools for Christ. We must go contrary to what is politically correct and socially acceptable.

TEOTWAWKI

Soon we will experience The End Of The World As We Know It, the Three Days of Darkness. Soon we will all give up television. Just as movies, radio and television prepared the world for the Great Apostasy, in the chastisement God will soon send upon this sinful world all three will be taken away. Above we considered briefly the coming Three Days of Darkness. There is not space here to consider this in any detail. It is recommended to read [The Coming Chastisement](#), which goes into far more detail. [\[52\]](#) One aspect of the Three Days of Darkness is the death of three quarters of the world population. With the death of this many people, the remaining people will be unable to keep the current system running. Electricity will cease to function. In fact, during the Three Days itself there apparently will be no electricity, because only blessed candles will give light. This may indicate that a solar flare will take down the electric grid about time the Chastisement begins.

Apocalypse warns:

And I heard another voice from heaven, saying: Go out from her, my people; that you be not partakers of her sins and that you receive not of her plagues. For her sins have reached unto heaven: and the Lord hath remembered her iniquities. [\[53\]](#)

We can conclude from what has been presented that the average television viewer sins mortally several times a day in the perverse programs they watch and their participation in the sins of others. It is time for Catholics to step away from the world and its sins and prepare their souls for the Chastisement that will soon come upon the earth. It is time for Catholics to adhere to the unchanging rules of morality, rather to the lax teachings of the 20th and 21st centuries. The Fathers of the Church could have condemned television as would the countless saints over the centuries. We must join them in their condemnation and adhere to the strict rules they laid down for Christian living. True times have changed, but we cannot change with them. Time have changed for the worse not for the better. Sins that were socially unacceptable ten years ago are acceptable now. And we can thank the television in part for this sorry state of affairs.

More Information

It is suggested that people look into these matters seriously. Several books on the evils of television have been written over the last half of a century. Although they cannot be recommended without some reservations, because they are written by neo-pagans, they do have some good research.

Also the current condition of the Catholic Church must be understood completely, lest one find themselves in an heretical sect following the *doctrines of devils*. We have written [54 Years that Changed the Catholic Church](#) in order to address this in a simple manner.

Those wishing to understand the coming chastisement are advised to read [The Coming Chastisement](#).

All of our books are available on Amazon and through major book retailers, such as Barnes and Noble and Hastings.

- [1] Dignity and Duties of the Priest, Saint Alphonsus, page 351.
- [2] <http://www.cognitiveliberty.org/5jcl/5JCL59.htm> Form The Journal of Cognivitie Liberties, volume 2, issue 2, pages 59-66, 2001 copyright
- [3] I Timothy 4:1
- [4] These laws are considered in a chapter coming later on.
- [5] <http://www.cognitiveliberty.org/5jcl/5JCL59.htm> Form The Journal of Cognivitie Liberties, volume 2, issue 2, pages 59-66, 2001 copyright
- [6] <http://www.tv.com/news/how-much-television-do-you-watch-per-week-24833/>
- [7] Sermons of the Cure of Ars, page 16
- [8] <http://www.allaboutlifechallenges.org/television-addiction.htm>
- [9] <http://www.cognitiveliberty.org/5jcl/5JCL59.htm> Form The Journal of Cognivitie Liberties, volume 2, issue 2, pages 59-66, 2001 copyright
- [10] Friends of the Cross, page 10
- [11] The Spiritual Life, page 384
- [12] Hell by Fr. F.X. Schouppe, S.J., page 57
- [13] The week is 168 hours long. This would return us to the average viewing when Pope Pius XII wrote his Encyclical on television.
- [14] For more information see my book 54 Years that Changed the Catholic Church
- [15] St. Alphonsus: Preparation For Death, page 285
- [16] Ecclesiasticus 3:24
- [17] Acts 19:19
- [18] The Spiritual Life, page 387
- [19] Pages 174-6 (Emphasis mine)
- [20] Internal Mission of the Holy Ghost page 314
- [21] For more information, please see my book The Coming Chastisement.
- [22] I Thessalonians 5:21-22
- [23] Magnum PI
- [24] Priests must know these things, and therefore are permitted to study them as a necessary near occasion of sin. However, they are warned to be careful and not exceed the requirements of duty.
- [25] I Thessalonians 5:21-22
- [26] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_films_condemned_by_the_Legion_of_Decency
- [27] We should warn all that this DVD contains some shocking things. One of the most shocking is the one they do not comment on. They have a clip from a popular *sitcom*, which denigrates going to church. In the clip one of the actors commits a blasphemy and they so not say a word about it. We cannot recommend watching this DVD.
- [28] Anton LaVey, The Devil's Notebook (Portland, Oregon, Feral House, 1992), p.84.
- [29] Ibid. p. 86.
- [30] The Devil's Notebook, page 85 Anton LaVey
- [31] Golden Book of the Commandments and Sacraments, page 33
- [32] Ibid page 67
- [33] Ibid page 85
- [34] Preparation for Death page 285
- [35] 12 Steps to Holiness and Salvation page 16
- [36] Ibid page 63
- [37] Ibid page 161
- [38] II. II Q. 168, art. 3. 431 S. Thorn. 4 Sent. dist. 16, Q. 4, art 2.
- [39] Cf. S. Alph. Lib. III. n. 427. 433 Ibid.
- [40] Benedict XIV, De Synod. Lib. II. cp. 10, n. 11. Cf. S. Alph. Lib. III.
- [41] Cf. Aertnys, I. c. n. 327; Lehmkuhl, I. c. P. I. L. II. cp. 3, n. 644.
- [42] Saint Pius X Press www.stpiusxpress.com has preserved over a thousand good Catholics books from tried and true authors prior to Vatican II.
- [43] Compare 43; S. Alph. App. de prohib. libr. cp. 1; cf. Bengel, Pastoraltheologie (2 Ed.), Vol. II. 129, n. 7, p. 53 ff.; Clement XIII, Encycl. 1766; Pius IX, *Qui Pluribus*, 20 Nov., 1846 j many pastorals of bishops.
- [44] Cf. Propos. 61 damn, ab Innoc. XI. The condemned proposition is: "He can sometimes be absolved, who remains in a proximate occasion of sinning, which he can and does not wish to omit, but rather directly and professedly seeks or enters into."
- [45] Cf. S. Alph. Lib. III. n. 429.
- [46] Invincible ignorance should be overcome by studying the truth.
- [47] Cf. Aertnys, I. c. n. 331, Q. II.
- [48] Cf. Aertnys, I. c. n. 330, Q. II; Gury, Tom. T. n. 256; Varceno, Theol. Mor. Tract. 8, cp. 2, art. 3; Berardi, Praxis Conf. nn. G6 et 240; M tiller, Theol. Mor. Lib. II. 36, n. 6.
- [49] Look at the state of *morality* today. One readily sees that all of this has happened and more.
- [50] Dignity and Duties of the Priest, Saint Alphonsus, page 351.

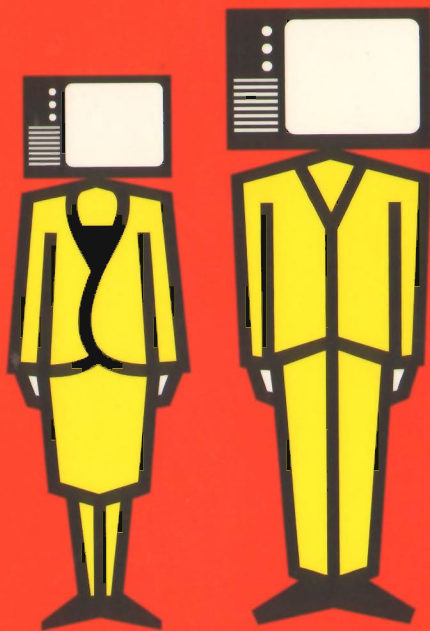
- [51] Romans 12:1-2
- [52] This can be obtained from the Vatican in Exile or on Amazon.
- [53] Apocalypse 18:4-5



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AMUSING OURSELVES TO DEATH

PUBLIC DISCOURSE IN THE AGE OF SHOW BUSINESS



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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

For the last third of the twentieth century, Neil Postman was one of America's foremost social critics and education and communications theorists, and his ideas and accessibility won him an international following. An influential and revered teacher, he was professor for more than forty years at New York University, where he founded the renowned Media Ecology program. Blessed with an unusually far-reaching mind, he authored more than twenty books, producing major works on education (*Teaching as a Subversive Activity*, *The End of Education*), childhood (*The Disappearance of Childhood*), language (*Crazy Talk, Stupid Talk*), news (*How to Watch TV News*, with Steve Powers) and technology's impact on culture (*Technopoly*). *Amusing Ourselves to Death* remains his most reverberating and widely read book, translated into more than a dozen languages. He was educated at the State University of New York at Fredonia and Columbia University. He died in October 2003, at the age of seventy-two.

Andrew Postman, Neil's son, is the author of five books, including the novel *Now I Know Everything*. For several years he was a monthly columnist for *Glamour* and his work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and *New York Magazine*, among numerous publications.

Amusing Ourselves to Death

*Public Discourse
in the Age of
Show Business*

Neil Postman

New Introduction by Andrew Postman



PENGUIN BOOKS

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Introduction to the Twentieth Anniversary Edition

Now this?

A book of social commentary published twenty years ago? You're not busy enough writing e-mails, returning calls, downloading tunes, playing games (online, PlayStation, Game Boy), checking out Web sites, sending text messages, IM'ing, Tivoing, watching what you've Tivoed, browsing through magazines and newspapers, reading *new* books—now you've got to stop and read a book that first appeared in the last century, not to mention the last millennium? Come on. Like your outlook on today could seriously be rocked by this plain-spoken provocation about The World of 1985, a world yet to be infiltrated by the Internet, cell phones, PDAs, cable channels by the hundreds, DVDs, call-waiting, caller ID, blogs, flat-screens, HDTV, and iPods? Is it really plausible that this slim volume, with its once-urgent premonitions about the nuanced and deep-seated perils of television, could feel timely *today*, the Age of Computers? Is it really plausible that this book about how TV is turning all public life (education, religion, politics, journalism) into entertainment; how the image is undermining other forms of communication, particularly the written word; and how our bottomless appetite for TV will make content so abundantly available, context be damned, that we'll be overwhelmed by "information glut" until what is truly meaningful is lost and we no longer care what we've lost as long as we're being amused. . . . Can such a book possibly have relevance to you and The World of 2006 and beyond?

I think you've answered your own question.

I, too, think the answer is yes, but as Neil Postman's son, I'm biased. Where are we to find objective corroboration that reading *Amusing Ourselves to Death* in 2006, in a society that worships TV and technology as ours does, is nearly an act of defiance, one of those I-didn't-realize-it-was-dark-until-someone-flipped-the-switch encounters with an illuminating intellect? Let's not take the word of those who studied under my father at New York University, many of whom have gone on to teach in their own college (and occasionally high school) courses what he argues in these pages. These fine minds are, as my father's was, of a bygone era, a different media environment, and their biases may make them, as they made him, hostage of another time, perhaps incapable of seeing the present world as it is rather than as they'd like it to be. (One man's R rating is another's PG-13.) And just to make a clean slate of it, let's not rely, either, on the opinions of the numerous readers of the original edition of *Amusing Ourselves to Death* (translated into a dozen languages, including German, Indonesian, Turkish, Danish and, most recently, Chinese), so many of whom wrote to my father, or buttonholed him at public speaking events, to tell him how dead-on his argument was. Their support, while genuine, was expressed over the last two decades, so some of it might be outdated. We'll disregard the views of these teachers and students, businesspeople and artists, conservatives and liberals, atheists and churchgoers, and all those parents. (We'll also disregard Roger Waters, cofounder of the legendary band Pink Floyd, whose solo album, *Amused to Death*, was inspired by the book. Go, Dad.)

So whose opinion matters?

In rereading this book to figure out what might be said about it twenty years later, I tried to think the way my father would, since he could no longer. He died in October 2003, at age seventy-two. Channeling him, I realized immediately who

offers the best test of whether *Amusing Ourselves to Death* is still relevant.

College kids.

Today's eighteen-to-twenty-two-year-olds live in a vastly different media environment from the one that existed in 1985. Their relationship to TV differs. Back then, MTV was in its late infancy. Today, news scrolls and corner-of-the-screen promos and "reality" shows and infomercials and nine hundred channels are the norm. And TV no longer dominates the media landscape. "Screen time" also means hours spent in front of the computer, video monitor, cell phone, and handheld. Multitasking is standard. Communities have been replaced by demographics. Silence has been replaced by background noise. It's a different world.

(It's different for all of us, of course—children, young teens, parents, seniors—but college kids form an especially rich grouping, poised between innocence and sophistication, respect and irreverence.)

When today's students are assigned *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, almost none of them have heard of Neil Postman or been exposed to his ideas (he wrote more than twenty books, on such subjects as education, language, childhood, and technology), suggesting that their views, besides being pertinent, are relatively uncorrupted. I called several of my father's former students who are now teachers, and who teach *Amusing Ourselves to Death* in courses that examine some cross-section of ideas about TV, culture, computing, technology, mass media, communications, politics, journalism, education, religion, and language. I asked the teachers what their students thought of the book, particularly its timeliness. The teachers were kind enough to share many of their students' thoughts, from papers and class discussion.

"In the book [Postman] makes the point that there is no reflection time in the world anymore," said a student named

Jonathan. "When I go to a restaurant, everyone's on their cell phone, talking or playing games. I have no ability to sit by myself and just think." Said Liz: "It's *more* relevant now. In class we asked if, now that there's cable, which there really wasn't when the book was written, are there channels that are not just about entertainment? We tried to find one to disprove his theory. One kid said the Weather Channel but another mentioned how they have all those shows on tornadoes and try to make weather fun. The only good example we came up with was C-SPAN, which no one watches." Cara: "Teachers are not considered good if they don't entertain their classes." Remarked Ben (whose professor called him the "class skeptic," and who, when the book was assigned, groaned, "Why do we have to read this?"): "Postman says TV makes everything about the present—and there we were, criticizing the book because it wasn't published yesterday." Reginald: "This book is not just about TV." Sandra: "The book was absolutely on target about the 2004 presidential election campaign and debates." One student pointed out that Arnold Schwarzenegger announced his candidacy for the California governorship on *The Tonight Show*. Maria noted that the oversimplification and thinking "fragmentation" promoted by TV-watching may have contributed to our Red State/Blue State polarization. Another noted the emergence of a new series of "Bible magazines," whose cover format is modeled on teen magazines, with cover lines like "Top 10 Tips to Getting Closer to God"—"it's religion mimicking an MTV kind of world," said the student. Others wondered if the recent surge in children diagnosed with attention deficit disorder was an indication of a need to be constantly stimulated.

Kaitlin switched her major to print journalism after reading the book. Andrea would recommend it to anyone concerned with media ethics. Mike said even those who won't agree with the book's arguments—as he did not—should still read it, to be provoked. Many students ("left wingers and right wingers both," said the professor) were especially taken with my fa-

ther's "Now . . . this" idea: the phenomenon whereby the reporting of a horrific event—a rape or a five-alarm fire or global warming—is followed immediately by the anchor's cheerfully exclaiming "Now . . . this," which segues into a story about Janet Jackson's exposed nipple or a commercial for lite beer, creating a sequencing of information so random, so disparate in scale and value, as to be incoherent, even psychotic.

Another teacher remarked that students love *how* the book is told—by a writer who's at heart a storyteller. "They love that he refers to books and people they've heard of," she said. Alison: "He doesn't dumb it down—he makes allusions to great art and poetry." Matt said that, ironically, "Postman proves you can be entertaining—and without a single picture." Of her students' impressions, one teacher said, "He speaks to them without jargon, in a way in which they feel respected. They feel he's just having a conversation with them, but inspiring them to think at the same time." Another professor noted that "kids come to the conclusion that TV is almost exclusively interested in presenting show business and sensationalism and in making money. Amazing as it seems, they had never realized that before."

It no doubt appears to you that, after all my grand talk of objectivity, I've stacked the deck in favor of the book's virtue. But that's honestly the overwhelming reaction—at least among a slice of Generation Y, a population segment that one can imagine has as many reasons *not* to like the book as to like it. One professor said that in a typical class of twenty-five students who read the book, twenty-three will write papers that either praise, or are animated by, its ideas; two will say the book was a stupid waste of time. A 92 percent rating? There's no one who expresses an idea—certainly no politician—who wouldn't take that number.

Of course, students had criticisms of the book, too. Many didn't appreciate the assault on television—a companion to them, a source of pleasure and comfort—and felt as if they had to defend their culture. Some considered TV their *parents'*

culture, not theirs—they are of the Internet—so the book's theses were less relevant. Some thought my father was anti-change, that he so exalted the virtues fostered by the written word and its culture, he was not open to acknowledging many of the positive social improvements TV had brought about, and what a democratic and leveling force it could be. Some disagreed with his assessment that TV is in complete charge: remote control, an abundance of channels, and VCRs and DVRs all enable you to "customize" your programming, even to skip commercials. A common critique was that he should have offered solutions; you can't put the toothpaste back in the tube, after all, so what now?

And there was this: Yeah, what he said in 1985 had come startlingly true, we *had* amused ourselves to death . . . so why read it?

One professor uses the book in conjunction with an experiment she calls an "e-media fast." For twenty-four hours, each student must refrain from electronic media. When she announces the assignment, she told me, 90 percent of the students shrug, thinking it's no big deal. But when they realize all the things they must give up for a whole day—cell phone, computer, Internet, TV, car radio, etc.—"they start to moan and groan." She tells them they can still read books. She acknowledges it will be a tough day, though for roughly eight of the twenty-four hours they'll be asleep. She says if they break the fast—if they answer the phone, say, or simply have to check e-mail—they must begin from scratch.

"The papers I get back are amazing," says the professor. "They have titles like 'The Worst Day of My Life' or 'The Best Experience I Ever Had,' always extreme. 'I thought I was going to die,' they'll write. 'I went to turn on the TV but if I did I realized, my God, I'd have to start all over again.' Each student has his or her own weakness—for some it's TV, some the cell phone, some the Internet or their PDA. But no matter how much they hate abstaining, or how hard it is to hear the phone ring and not answer it, they take time to do things they

haven't done in years. They actually walk down the street to visit their friend. They have extended conversations. One wrote, 'I thought to do things I hadn't thought to do *ever*.' The experience changes them. Some are so affected that they determine to fast on their own, one day a month. In that course I take them through the classics—from Plato and Aristotle through today—and years later, when former students write or call to say hello, the thing they remember is the media fast."

Like the media fast, *Amusing Ourselves to Death* is a call to action. It is, in my father's words, "an inquiry . . . and a lamentation," yes, but it aspires to greater things. It is an exhortation to *do* something. It's a counterpunch to what my father thought daily TV news was: "inert, consisting of information that gives us something to talk about but cannot lead to any meaningful action." Dad was a lover of history, a champion for collective memory and what we now quaintly refer to as "civilizing influences," but he did not live in the past. His book urges us to claim a way to be more alert and engaged. His ideas are still here, he isn't, and it's time for the reins to be grabbed by those of a new generation, natives of this brave new world who understand it better.

Twenty years isn't what it used to be. Where once it stood for a single generation, now it seems to stand for three. Everything moves faster. "Change changed," my father wrote in another book.

A lot has changed since this book appeared. News consumption among the young is way down. Network news and entertainment divisions are far more entwined, despite protests (some genuine, some perhaps not) by the news divisions. When Jon Stewart, host of Comedy Central's *The Daily Show*, went on CNN's *Crossfire* to make this very point—that serious news and show business ought to be distinguishable, for the sake of public discourse and the republic—the hosts seemed incapable of even understanding the words coming out of his

mouth. The sound bite is now more like a sound nibble, and it's rare, even petulant, to hear someone challenge its absurd insubstantiality; "the question of how television affects us has receded into the background" (Dad's words, not mine, from 1985). Fox News has established itself, and thrived. Corporate conglomeration is up, particularly among media companies. Our own media companies don't provide truly gruesome war images as part of the daily news, but then they didn't do so twenty years ago either (though forty years ago they did). The quality of graphics (i.e., the reality quotient) of computer and video games is way up. Communities exist that didn't, thanks to the Internet, particularly peer-to-peer computing. A new kind of collaborative creativity abounds, thanks to the "open source" movement, which gave us the Linux operating system. However, other communities are collapsing: Far fewer people join clubs that meet regularly, fewer families eat dinner together, and people don't have friends over or know their neighbors the way they used to. More school administrators and politicians and business executives hanker to wire schools for computers, as if that is the key to improving American education. The number of hours the average American watches TV has remained steady, at about four and a half hours a day, every day (by age sixty-five, a person will have spent twelve uninterrupted years in front of the TV). Childhood obesity is way up. Some things concern our children more than they used to, some not at all. Maybe there's more hope than there was, maybe less. Maybe the amount is a constant.

Substantive as this book is, it was predicated on a "hook": that one British writer (George Orwell) with a frightening vision of the future, a vision that many feared would come true, was mostly off-base, while another British writer (Aldous Huxley) with a frightening vision of the future, a vision less well-known and less feared, was scarily on target. My father argued his point, persuasively, but it was a point for another time—the Age of Television. New technologies and media are

in the ascendancy. Fortunately—and this, more than anything, is what I think makes *Amusing Ourselves to Death* so emphatically relevant—my father asked such good questions that they can be asked of non-television things, of all sorts of transforming developments and events that have happened since 1985, and since his death, and of things still unformed, for generations to come (though “generations to come” may someday mean a span of three years). His questions can be asked about all technologies and media. What happens to us when we become infatuated with and then seduced by them? Do they free us or imprison us? Do they improve or degrade democracy? Do they make our leaders more accountable or less so? Our system more transparent or less so? Do they make us better citizens or better consumers? Are the trade-offs worth it? If they’re not worth it, yet we still can’t stop ourselves from embracing the next new thing because that’s just how we’re wired, then what strategies can we devise to maintain control? Dignity? Meaning? My father was not a curmudgeon about all this, as some thought. It was never optimism he lacked; it was certainty. “We must be careful in praising or condemning because the future may hold surprises for us,” he wrote. Nor did he fear TV across the board (as some thought). Junk television was fine. “*The A-Team* and *Cheers* are no threat to our public health,” he wrote. “*60 Minutes*, *Eyewitness News*, and *Sesame Street* are.”

A student of Dad’s, a teacher himself, says his own students are more responsive to *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, not less, than they were five or ten years ago. “When the book first came out, it was ahead of its time, and some people didn’t understand its reach,” he says. “It’s a twenty-first century book published in the twentieth century.” In 1986, soon after the book was published and had started to make ripples, Dad was on ABC’s *Nightline*, discussing with Ted Koppel the effect TV can have on society if we let it control us, rather than vice versa. As I recall, at one juncture, to illustrate his point that our brief attention span and our appetite for

feel-good content can short-circuit any meaningful discourse, Dad said, "For example, Ted, we're having an important discussion about the culture but in thirty seconds we'll have to break for a commercial to sell cars or toothpaste."

Mr. Koppel, one of the rare serious figures on network television, smiled wryly—or was it fatigue?

"Actually, Dr. Postman," he said, "it's more like ten seconds." There's still time.

*Andrew Postman
Brooklyn, New York
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In 1985 . . .

If you were alert back then, this refresher may be unnecessary, even laughable. If you were not alert then, this may just be laughable. But it also may help to clarify references in the book about things of that moment. In 1985:

The United States population is 240 million. The Cold War is still on, though Mikhail Gorbachev has just become the Soviet leader. Ronald Reagan is president. Other major political figures include Walter "Fritz" Mondale, Democratic presidential nominee the year before; Geraldine Ferraro, his vice-presidential running mate; and presidential hopefuls/Senators Gary Hart and John Glenn (the latter a former astronaut). Ed Koch is mayor of New York City. David Garth is a top media consultant for political candidates.

Top-rated TV shows include *Dynasty*, *Dallas* (though it has been several years since the drama of "Who Shot J.R.?" gripped the TV-watching nation), *The A-Team*, *Cheers*, and *Hill Street Blues*. Dan Rather, Tom Brokaw, and Peter Jennings are the nightly network news anchors. *The MacNeil/Lehrer NewsHour* is, as *The NewsHour with Jim Lehrer* years later will be, public television's respected, low-rated evening news program. Televangelism is enjoying a heyday: leading practitioners include Jimmy Swaggart, Pat Robertson, Jim Bakker, Billy Graham, Jerry Falwell, Robert Schuller, and Oral Roberts. Howard Cosell has recently retired after many years as TV's most recognizable sports voice. The show *Entertainment Tonight* and the cable network MTV, both born a few years earlier, are runaway

successes. Two of the most successful TV commercial campaigns are American Express's series about farflung tourists losing travelers' checks and Wisk detergent's spot about "ring around the collar" (about which my father wrote a provocative and funny essay called "The Parable of the Ring Around the Collar").

The Mac computer is one year old, *USA Today* three, *People* magazine ten. Dr. Ruth Westheimer hosts a popular radio call-in show, offering sex advice with cheer and grandmotherly frankness. African Americans are known as blacks. Martina Navratilova is the world's best female tennis player. Trivial Pursuit is a top-selling board game. Certain entertainers to whom my father refers—e.g., comedians Shecky Greene, Red Buttons, and Milton Berle, singer Dionne Warwick, TV talk-show host David Susskind—are past their prime, even then.

A.P.

Foreword

We were keeping our eye on 1984. When the year came and the prophecy didn't, thoughtful Americans sang softly in praise of themselves. The roots of liberal democracy had held. Wherever else the terror had happened, we, at least, had not been visited by Orwellian nightmares.

But we had forgotten that alongside Orwell's dark vision, there was another—slightly older, slightly less well known, equally chilling: Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*. Contrary to common belief even among the educated, Huxley and Orwell did not prophesy the same thing. Orwell warns that we will be overcome by an externally imposed oppression. But in Huxley's vision, no Big Brother is required to deprive people of their autonomy, maturity and history. As he saw it, people will come to love their oppression, to adore the technologies that undo their capacities to think.

What Orwell feared were those who would ban books. What Huxley feared was that there would be no reason to ban a book, for there would be no one who wanted to read one. Orwell feared those who would deprive us of information. Huxley feared those who would give us so much that we would be reduced to passivity and egoism. Orwell feared that the truth would be concealed from us. Huxley feared the truth would be drowned in a sea of irrelevance. Orwell feared we would become a captive culture. Huxley feared we would become a trivial culture, preoccupied with some equivalent of the feelies, the orgy porgy, and the centrifugal bumblepuppy. As Huxley re-

marked in *Brave New World Revisited*, the civil libertarians and rationalists who are ever on the alert to oppose tyranny “failed to take into account man’s almost infinite appetite for distractions.” In 1984, Huxley added, people are controlled by inflicting pain. In *Brave New World*, they are controlled by inflicting pleasure. In short, Orwell feared that what we hate will ruin us. Huxley feared that what we love will ruin us.

This book is about the possibility that Huxley, not Orwell, was right.

Part I.

I.

The Medium Is the Metaphor

At different times in our history, different cities have been the focal point of a radiating American spirit. In the late eighteenth century, for example, Boston was the center of a political radicalism that ignited a shot heard round the world—a shot that could not have been fired any other place but the suburbs of Boston. At its report, all Americans, including Virginians, became Bostonians at heart. In the mid-nineteenth century, New York became the symbol of the idea of a melting-pot America—or at least a non-English one—as the wretched refuse from all over the world disembarked at Ellis Island and spread over the land their strange languages and even stranger ways. In the early twentieth century, Chicago, the city of big shoulders and heavy winds, came to symbolize the industrial energy and dynamism of America. If there is a statue of a hog butcher somewhere in Chicago, then it stands as a reminder of the time when America was railroads, cattle, steel mills and entrepreneurial adventures. If there is no such statue, there ought to be, just as there is a statue of a Minute Man to recall the Age of Boston, as the Statue of Liberty recalls the Age of New York.

Today, we must look to the city of Las Vegas, Nevada, as a metaphor of our national character and aspiration, its symbol a thirty-foot-high cardboard picture of a slot machine and a chorus girl. For Las Vegas is a city entirely devoted to the idea of entertainment, and as such proclaims the spirit of a culture in which all public discourse increasingly takes the form of entertainment. Our politics, religion, news, athletics, education and

commerce have been transformed into congenial adjuncts of show business, largely without protest or even much popular notice. The result is that we are a people on the verge of amusing ourselves to death.

As I write, the President of the United States is a former Hollywood movie actor. One of his principal challengers in 1984 was once a featured player on television's most glamorous show of the 1960's, that is to say, an astronaut. Naturally, a movie has been made about his extraterrestrial adventure. Former nominee George McGovern has hosted the popular television show "Saturday Night Live." So has a candidate of more recent vintage, the Reverend Jesse Jackson.

Meanwhile, former President Richard Nixon, who once claimed he lost an election because he was sabotaged by make-up men, has offered Senator Edward Kennedy advice on how to make a serious run for the presidency: lose twenty pounds. Although the Constitution makes no mention of it, it would appear that fat people are now effectively excluded from running for high political office. Probably bald people as well. Almost certainly those whose looks are not significantly enhanced by the cosmetician's art. Indeed, we may have reached the point where cosmetics has replaced ideology as the field of expertise over which a politician must have competent control.

America's journalists, i.e., television newscasters, have not missed the point. Most spend more time with their hair dryers than with their scripts, with the result that they comprise the most glamorous group of people this side of Las Vegas. Although the Federal Communications Act makes no mention of it, those without camera appeal are excluded from addressing the public about what is called "the news of the day." Those with camera appeal can command salaries exceeding one million dollars a year.

American businessmen discovered, long before the rest of us, that the quality and usefulness of their goods are subordinate to the artifice of their display; that, in fact, half the principles of

capitalism as praised by Adam Smith or condemned by Karl Marx are irrelevant. Even the Japanese, who are said to make better cars than the Americans, know that economics is less a science than a performing art, as Toyota's yearly advertising budget confirms.

Not long ago, I saw Billy Graham join with Shecky Green, Red Buttons, Dionne Warwick, Milton Berle and other theologians in a tribute to George Burns, who was celebrating himself for surviving eighty years in show business. The Reverend Graham exchanged one-liners with Burns about making preparations for Eternity. Although the Bible makes no mention of it, the Reverend Graham assured the audience that God loves those who make people laugh. It was an honest mistake. He merely mistook NBC for God.

Dr. Ruth Westheimer is a psychologist who has a popular radio program and a nightclub act in which she informs her audiences about sex in all of its infinite variety and in language once reserved for the bedroom and street corners. She is almost as entertaining as the Reverend Billy Graham, and has been quoted as saying, "I don't start out to be funny. But if it comes out that way, I use it. If they call me an entertainer, I say that's great. When a professor teaches with a sense of humor, people walk away remembering."¹ She did not say what they remember or of what use their remembering is. But she has a point: It's great to be an entertainer. Indeed, in America God favors all those who possess both a talent and a format to amuse, whether they be preachers, athletes, entrepreneurs, politicians, teachers or journalists. In America, the least amusing people are its professional entertainers.

Culture watchers and worriers—those of the type who read books like this one—will know that the examples above are not aberrations but, in fact, clichés. There is no shortage of critics who have observed and recorded the dissolution of public discourse in America and its conversion into the arts of show business. But most of them, I believe, have barely begun to tell the

story of the origin and meaning of this descent into a vast triviality. Those who have written vigorously on the matter tell us, for example, that what is happening is the residue of an exhausted capitalism; or, on the contrary, that it is the tasteless fruit of the maturing of capitalism; or that it is the neurotic aftermath of the Age of Freud; or the retribution of our allowing God to perish; or that it all comes from the old stand-bys, greed and ambition.

I have attended carefully to these explanations, and I do not say there is nothing to learn from them. Marxists, Freudians, Lévi-Straussians, even Creation Scientists are not to be taken lightly. And, in any case, I should be very surprised if the story I have to tell is anywhere near the whole truth. We are all, as Huxley says someplace, Great Abbreviators, meaning that none of us has the wit to know the whole truth, the time to tell it if we believed we did, or an audience so gullible as to accept it. But you *will* find an argument here that presumes a clearer grasp of the matter than many that have come before. Its value, such as it is, resides in the directness of its perspective, which has its origins in observations made 2,300 years ago by Plato. It is an argument that fixes its attention on the forms of human conversation, and postulates that how we are obliged to conduct such conversations will have the strongest possible influence on what ideas we can conveniently express. And what ideas are convenient to express inevitably become the important content of a culture.

I use the word "conversation" metaphorically to refer not only to speech but to all techniques and technologies that permit people of a particular culture to exchange messages. In this sense, all culture is a conversation or, more precisely, a corporation of conversations, conducted in a variety of symbolic modes. Our attention here is on how forms of public discourse regulate and even dictate what kind of content can issue from such forms.

To take a simple example of what this means, consider the

primitive technology of smoke signals. While I do not know exactly what content was once carried in the smoke signals of American Indians, I can safely guess that it did not include philosophical argument. Puffs of smoke are insufficiently complex to express ideas on the nature of existence, and even if they were not, a Cherokee philosopher would run short of either wood or blankets long before he reached his second axiom. You cannot use smoke to do philosophy. Its form excludes the content.

To take an example closer to home: As I suggested earlier, it is implausible to imagine that anyone like our twenty-seventh President, the multi-chinned, three-hundred-pound William Howard Taft, could be put forward as a presidential candidate in today's world. The shape of a man's body is largely irrelevant to the shape of his ideas when he is addressing a public in writing or on the radio or, for that matter, in smoke signals. But it is quite relevant on television. The grossness of a three-hundred-pound image, even a talking one, would easily overwhelm any logical or spiritual subtleties conveyed by speech. For on television, discourse is conducted largely through visual imagery, which is to say that television gives us a conversation in images, not words. The emergence of the image-manager in the political arena and the concomitant decline of the speech writer attest to the fact that television demands a different kind of content from other media. You cannot do political philosophy on television. Its form works against the content.

To give still another example, one of more complexity: The information, the content, or, if you will, the "stuff" that makes up what is called "the news of the day" did not exist—could not exist—in a world that lacked the media to give it expression. I do not mean that things like fires, wars, murders and love affairs did not, ever and always, happen in places all over the world. I mean that lacking a technology to advertise them, people could not attend to them, could not include them in their daily business. Such information simply could not exist as

part of the content of culture. This idea—that there is a content called “the news of the day”—was entirely created by the telegraph (and since amplified by newer media), which made it possible to move decontextualized information over vast spaces at incredible speed. The news of the day is a figment of our technological imagination. It is, quite precisely, a media event. We attend to fragments of events from all over the world because we have multiple media whose forms are well suited to fragmented conversation. Cultures without speed-of-light media—let us say, cultures in which smoke signals are the most efficient space-conquering tool available—do not have news of the day. Without a medium to create its form, the news of the day does not exist.

To say it, then, as plainly as I can, this book is an inquiry into and a lamentation about the most significant American cultural fact of the second half of the twentieth century: the decline of the Age of Typography and the ascendancy of the Age of Television. This change-over has dramatically and irreversibly shifted the content and meaning of public discourse, since two media so vastly different cannot accommodate the same ideas. As the influence of print wanes, the content of politics, religion, education, and anything else that comprises public business must change and be recast in terms that are most suitable to television.

If all of this sounds suspiciously like Marshall McLuhan’s aphorism, the medium is the message, I will not disavow the association (although it is fashionable to do so among respectable scholars who, were it not for McLuhan, would today be mute). I met McLuhan thirty years ago when I was a graduate student and he an unknown English professor. I believed then, as I believe now, that he spoke in the tradition of Orwell and Huxley—that is, as a prophet, and I have remained steadfast to his teaching that the clearest way to see through a culture is to attend to its tools for conversation. I might add that my interest in this point of view was first stirred by a prophet far more

formidable than McLuhan, more ancient than Plato. In studying the Bible as a young man, I found intimations of the idea that forms of media favor particular kinds of content and therefore are capable of taking command of a culture. I refer specifically to the Decalogue, the Second Commandment of which prohibits the Israelites from making concrete images of anything. "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water beneath the earth." I wondered then, as so many others have, as to why the God of these people would have included instructions on how they were to symbolize, or not symbolize, their experience. It is a strange injunction to include as part of an ethical system *unless its author assumed a connection between forms of human communication and the quality of a culture*. We may hazard a guess that a people who are being asked to embrace an abstract, universal deity would be rendered unfit to do so by the habit of drawing pictures or making statues or depicting their ideas in any concrete, iconographic forms. The God of the Jews was to exist in the Word and through the Word, an unprecedented conception requiring the highest order of abstract thinking. Iconography thus became blasphemy so that a new kind of God could enter a culture. People like ourselves who are in the process of converting their culture from word-centered to image-centered might profit by reflecting on this Mosaic injunction. But even if I am wrong in these conjectures, it is, I believe, a wise and particularly relevant supposition that the media of communication available to a culture are a dominant influence on the formation of the culture's intellectual and social preoccupations.

Speech, of course, is the primal and indispensable medium. It made us human, keeps us human, and in fact defines what human means. This is not to say that if there were no other means of communication all humans would find it equally convenient to speak about the same things in the same way. We know enough about language to understand that variations in the

structures of languages will result in variations in what may be called "world view." How people think about time and space, and about things and processes, will be greatly influenced by the grammatical features of their language. We dare not suppose therefore that all human minds are unanimous in understanding how the world is put together. But how much more divergence there is in world view among different cultures can be imagined when we consider the great number and variety of tools for conversation that go beyond speech. For although culture is a creation of speech, it is recreated anew by every medium of communication—from painting to hieroglyphs to the alphabet to television. Each medium, like language itself, makes possible a unique mode of discourse by providing a new orientation for thought, for expression, for sensibility. Which, of course, is what McLuhan meant in saying the medium is the message. His aphorism, however, is in need of amendment because, as it stands, it may lead one to confuse a message with a metaphor. A message denotes a specific, concrete statement about the world. But the forms of our media, including the symbols through which they permit conversation, do not make such statements. They are rather like metaphors, working by unobtrusive but powerful implication to enforce their special definitions of reality. Whether we are experiencing the world through the lens of speech or the printed word or the television camera, our media-metaphors classify the world for us, sequence it, frame it, enlarge it, reduce it, color it, argue a case for what the world is like. As Ernst Cassirer remarked:

Physical reality seems to recede in proportion as man's symbolic activity advances. Instead of dealing with the things themselves man is in a sense constantly conversing with himself. He has so enveloped himself in linguistic forms, in artistic images, in mythical symbols or religious rites that he cannot see or know anything except by the interposition of [an] artificial medium.²

What is peculiar about such interpositions of media is that their role in directing what we will see or know is so rarely noticed. A person who reads a book or who watches television or who glances at his watch is not usually interested in how his mind is organized and controlled by these events, still less in what idea of the world is suggested by a book, television, or a watch. But there are men and women who have noticed these things, especially in our own times. Lewis Mumford, for example, has been one of our great noticers. He is not the sort of a man who looks at a clock merely to see what time it is. Not that he lacks interest in the content of clocks, which is of concern to everyone from moment to moment, but he is far more interested in how a clock creates the idea of "moment to moment." He attends to the philosophy of clocks, to clocks as metaphor, about which our education has had little to say and clock makers nothing at all. "The clock," Mumford has concluded, "is a piece of power machinery whose 'product' is seconds and minutes." In manufacturing such a product, the clock has the effect of disassociating time from human events and thus nourishes the belief in an independent world of mathematically measurable sequences. Moment to moment, it turns out, is not God's conception, or nature's. It is man conversing with himself about and through a piece of machinery he created.

In Mumford's great book *Technics and Civilization*, he shows how, beginning in the fourteenth century, the clock made us into time-keepers, and then time-savers, and now time-servers. In the process, we have learned irreverence toward the sun and the seasons, for in a world made up of seconds and minutes, the authority of nature is superseded. Indeed, as Mumford points out, with the invention of the clock, Eternity ceased to serve as the measure and focus of human events. And thus, though few would have imagined the connection, the inexorable ticking of the clock may have had more to do with the weakening of God's supremacy than all the treatises produced by the phi-

losophers of the Enlightenment; that is to say, the clock introduced a new form of conversation between man and God, in which God appears to have been the loser. Perhaps Moses should have included another Commandment: Thou shalt not make mechanical representations of time.

That the alphabet introduced a new form of conversation between man and man is by now a commonplace among scholars. To be able to *see* one's utterances rather than only to hear them is no small matter, though our education, once again, has had little to say about this. Nonetheless, it is clear that phonetic writing created a new conception of knowledge, as well as a new sense of intelligence, of audience and of posterity, all of which Plato recognized at an early stage in the development of texts. "No man of intelligence," he wrote in his Seventh Letter, "will venture to express his philosophical views in language, especially not in language that is unchangeable, which is true of that which is set down in written characters." This notwithstanding, he wrote voluminously and understood better than anyone else that the setting down of views in written characters would be the beginning of philosophy, not its end. Philosophy cannot exist without criticism, and writing makes it possible and convenient to subject thought to a continuous and concentrated scrutiny. Writing freezes speech and in so doing gives birth to the grammarian, the logician, the rhetorician, the historian, the scientist—all those who must hold language before them so that they can see what it means, where it errs, and where it is leading.

Plato knew all of this, which means that he knew that writing would bring about a perceptual revolution: a shift from the ear to the eye as an organ of language processing. Indeed, there is a legend that to encourage such a shift Plato insisted that his students study geometry before entering his Academy. If true, it was a sound idea, for as the great literary critic Northrop Frye has remarked, "the written word is far more powerful than simply a reminder: it re-creates the past in the present, and gives

us, not the familiar remembered thing, but the glittering intensity of the summoned-up hallucination."³

All that Plato surmised about the consequences of writing is now well understood by anthropologists, especially those who have studied cultures in which speech is the only source of complex conversation. Anthropologists know that the written word, as Northrop Frye meant to suggest, is not merely an echo of a speaking voice. It is another kind of voice altogether, a conjurer's trick of the first order. It must certainly have appeared that way to those who invented it, and that is why we should not be surprised that the Egyptian god Thoth, who is alleged to have brought writing to the King Thamus, was also the god of magic. People like ourselves may see nothing wondrous in writing, but our anthropologists know how strange and magical it appears to a purely oral people—a conversation with no one and yet with everyone. What could be stranger than the silence one encounters when addressing a question to a text? What could be more metaphysically puzzling than addressing an unseen audience, as every writer of books must do? And correcting oneself because one knows that an unknown reader will disapprove or misunderstand?

I bring all of this up because what my book is about is how our own tribe is undergoing a vast and trembling shift from the magic of writing to the magic of electronics. What I mean to point out here is that the introduction into a culture of a technique such as writing or a clock is not merely an extension of man's power to bind time but a transformation of his way of thinking—and, of course, of the content of his culture. And that is what I mean to say by calling a medium a metaphor. We are told in school, quite correctly, that a metaphor suggests what a thing is like by comparing it to something else. And by the power of its suggestion, it so fixes a conception in our minds that we cannot imagine the one thing without the other: Light is a wave; language, a tree; God, a wise and venerable man; the mind, a dark cavern illuminated by knowledge. And if these

metaphors no longer serve us, we must, in the nature of the matter, find others that will. Light is a particle; language, a river; God (as Bertrand Russell proclaimed), a differential equation; the mind, a garden that yearns to be cultivated.

But our media-metaphors are not so explicit or so vivid as these, and they are far more complex. In understanding their metaphorical function, we must take into account the symbolic forms of their information, the source of their information, the quantity and speed of their information, the context in which their information is experienced. Thus, it takes some digging to get at them, to grasp, for example, that a clock recreates time as an independent, mathematically precise sequence; that writing recreates the mind as a tablet on which experience is written; that the telegraph recreates news as a commodity. And yet, such digging becomes easier if we start from the assumption that in every tool we create, an idea is embedded that goes beyond the function of the thing itself. It has been pointed out, for example, that the invention of eyeglasses in the twelfth century not only made it possible to improve defective vision but suggested the idea that human beings need not accept as final either the endowments of nature or the ravages of time. Eyeglasses refuted the belief that anatomy is destiny by putting forward the idea that our bodies as well as our minds are improvable. I do not think it goes too far to say that there is a link between the invention of eyeglasses in the twelfth century and gene-splitting research in the twentieth.

Even such an instrument as the microscope, hardly a tool of everyday use, had embedded within it a quite astonishing idea, not about biology but about psychology. By revealing a world hitherto hidden from view, the microscope suggested a possibility about the structure of the mind.

If things are not what they seem, if microbes lurk, unseen, on and under our skin, if the invisible controls the visible, then is it not possible that ids and egos and superegos also lurk somewhere unseen? What else is psychoanalysis but a microscope of

the mind? Where do our notions of mind come from if not from metaphors generated by our tools? What does it mean to say that someone has an IQ of 126? There are no numbers in people's heads. Intelligence does not have quantity or magnitude, except as we believe that it does. And why do we believe that it does? Because we have tools that imply that this is what the mind is like. Indeed, our tools for thought suggest to us what our bodies are like, as when someone refers to her "biological clock," or when we talk of our "genetic codes," or when we read someone's face like a book, or when our facial expressions telegraph our intentions.

When Galileo remarked that the language of nature is written in mathematics, he meant it only as a metaphor. Nature itself does not speak. Neither do our minds or our bodies or, more to the point of this book, our bodies politic. Our conversations about nature and about ourselves are conducted in whatever "languages" we find it possible and convenient to employ. We do not see nature or intelligence or human motivation or ideology as "it" is but only as our languages are. And our languages are our media. Our media are our metaphors. Our metaphors create the content of our culture.

2.

Media as Epistemology

It is my intention in this book to show that a great media-metaphor shift has taken place in America, with the result that the content of much of our public discourse has become dangerous nonsense. With this in view, my task in the chapters ahead is straightforward. I must, first, demonstrate how, under the governance of the printing press, discourse in America was different from what it is now—generally coherent, serious and rational; and then how, under the governance of television, it has become shriveled and absurd. But to avoid the possibility that my analysis will be interpreted as standard-brand academic whimpering, a kind of elitist complaint against “junk” on television, I must first explain that my focus is on epistemology, not on aesthetics or literary criticism. Indeed, I appreciate junk as much as the next fellow, and I know full well that the printing press has generated enough of it to fill the Grand Canyon to overflowing. Television is not old enough to have matched printing’s output of junk.

And so, I raise no objection to television’s junk. The best things on television *are* its junk, and no one and nothing is seriously threatened by it. Besides, we do not measure a culture by its output of undisguised trivialities but by what it claims as significant. Therein is our problem, for television is at its most trivial and, therefore, most dangerous when its aspirations are high, when it presents itself as a carrier of important cultural conversations. The irony here is that this is what intellectuals and critics are constantly urging television to do. The trouble

with such people is that they do not take television seriously enough. For, like the printing press, television is nothing less than a philosophy of rhetoric. To talk seriously about television, one must therefore talk of epistemology. All other commentary is in itself trivial.

Epistemology is a complex and usually opaque subject concerned with the origins and nature of knowledge. The part of its subject matter that is relevant here is the interest it takes in definitions of truth and the sources from which such definitions come. In particular, I want to show that definitions of truth are derived, at least in part, from the character of the media of communication through which information is conveyed. I want to discuss how media are implicated in our epistemologies.

In the hope of simplifying what I mean by the title of this chapter, media as epistemology, I find it helpful to borrow a word from Northrop Frye, who has made use of a principle he calls *resonance*. "Through resonance," he writes, "a particular statement in a particular context acquires a universal significance."¹ Frye offers as an opening example the phrase "the grapes of wrath," which first appears in Isaiah in the context of a celebration of a prospective massacre of Edomites. But the phrase, Frye continues, "has long ago flown away from this context into many new contexts, contexts that give dignity to the human situation instead of merely reflecting its bigotries."² Having said this, Frye extends the idea of resonance so that it goes beyond phrases and sentences. A character in a play or story—Hamlet, for example, or Lewis Carroll's Alice—may have resonance. Objects may have resonance, and so may countries: "The smallest details of the geography of two tiny chopped-up countries, Greece and Israel, have imposed themselves on our consciousness until they have become part of the map of our own imaginative world, whether we have ever seen these countries or not."³

In addressing the question of the source of resonance, Frye concludes that metaphor is the generative force—that is, the

power of a phrase, a book, a character, or a history to unify and invest with meaning a variety of attitudes or experiences. Thus, Athens becomes a metaphor of intellectual excellence, wherever we find it; Hamlet, a metaphor of brooding indecisiveness; Alice's wanderings, a metaphor of a search for order in a world of semantic nonsense.

I now depart from Frye (who, I am certain, would raise no objection) but I take his word along with me. Every medium of communication, I am claiming, has resonance, for resonance is metaphor writ large. Whatever the original and limited context of its use may have been, a medium has the power to fly far beyond that context into new and unexpected ones. Because of the way it directs us to organize our minds and integrate our experience of the world, it imposes itself on our consciousness and social institutions in myriad forms. It sometimes has the power to become implicated in our concepts of piety, or goodness, or beauty. And it is always implicated in the ways we define and regulate our ideas of truth.

To explain how this happens—how the bias of a medium sits heavy, felt but unseen, over a culture—I offer three cases of truth-telling.

The first is drawn from a tribe in western Africa that has no writing system but whose rich oral tradition has given form to its ideas of civil law.⁴ When a dispute arises, the complainants come before the chief of the tribe and state their grievances. With no written law to guide him, the task of the chief is to search through his vast repertoire of proverbs and sayings to find one that suits the situation and is equally satisfying to both complainants. That accomplished, all parties are agreed that justice has been done, that the truth has been served. You will recognize, of course, that this was largely the method of Jesus and other Biblical figures who, living in an essentially oral culture, drew upon all of the resources of speech, including mnemonic devices, formulaic expressions and parables, as a means of discovering and revealing truth. As Walter Ong points out, in

oral cultures proverbs and sayings are not occasional devices: "They are incessant. They form the substance of thought itself. Thought in any extended form is impossible without them, for it consists in them."⁵

To people like ourselves any reliance on proverbs and sayings is reserved largely for resolving disputes among or with children. "Possession is nine-tenths of the law." "First come, first served." "Haste makes waste." These are forms of speech we pull out in small crises with our young but would think ridiculous to produce in a courtroom where "serious" matters are to be decided. Can you imagine a bailiff asking a jury if it has reached a decision and receiving the reply that "to err is human but to forgive is divine"? Or even better, "Let us render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and to God that which is God's"? For the briefest moment, the judge might be charmed but if a "serious" language form is not immediately forthcoming, the jury may end up with a longer sentence than most guilty defendants.

Judges, lawyers and defendants do not regard proverbs or sayings as a relevant response to legal disputes. In this, they are separated from the tribal chief by a media-metaphor. For in a print-based courtroom, where law books, briefs, citations and other written materials define and organize the method of finding the truth, the oral tradition has lost much of its resonance—but not all of it. Testimony is expected to be given orally, on the assumption that the spoken, not the written, word is a truer reflection of the state of mind of a witness. Indeed, in many courtrooms jurors are not permitted to take notes, nor are they given written copies of the judge's explanation of the law. Jurors are expected to *hear* the truth, or its opposite, not to read it. Thus, we may say that there is a clash of resonances in our concept of legal truth. On the one hand, there is a residual belief in the power of speech, and speech alone, to carry the truth; on the other hand, there is a much stronger belief in the authenticity of writing and, in particular, printing. This second belief

has little tolerance for poetry, proverbs, sayings, parables or any other expressions of oral wisdom. The law is what legislators and judges have written. In our culture, lawyers do not have to be wise; they need to be well briefed.

A similar paradox exists in universities, and with roughly the same distribution of resonances; that is to say, there are a few residual traditions based on the notion that speech is the primary carrier of truth. But for the most part, university conceptions of truth are tightly bound to the structure and logic of the printed word. To exemplify this point, I draw here on a personal experience that occurred during a still widely practiced medieval ritual known as a "doctoral oral." I use the word *medieval* literally, for in the Middle Ages students were always examined orally, and the tradition is carried forward in the assumption that a candidate must be able to talk competently about his written work. But, of course, the written work matters most.

In the case I have in mind, the issue of what is a legitimate form of truth-telling was raised to a level of consciousness rarely achieved. The candidate had included in his thesis a footnote, intended as documentation of a quotation, which read: "Told to the investigator at the Roosevelt Hotel on January 18, 1981, in the presence of Arthur Lingeman and Jerrold Gross." This citation drew the attention of no fewer than four of the five oral examiners, all of whom observed that it was hardly suitable as a form of documentation and that it ought to be replaced by a citation from a book or article. "You are not a journalist," one professor remarked. "You are supposed to be a scholar." Perhaps because the candidate knew of no published statement of what he was told at the Roosevelt Hotel, he defended himself vigorously on the grounds that there were witnesses to what he was told, that they were available to attest to the accuracy of the quotation, and that the form in which an idea is conveyed is irrelevant to its truth. Carried away on the wings of his eloquence, the candidate argued further that there were more than three hundred references to published works in his thesis and

that it was extremely unlikely that any of them would be checked for accuracy by the examiners, by which he meant to raise the question, Why do you *assume* the accuracy of a print-referenced citation but not a speech-referenced one?

The answer he received took the following line: You are mistaken in believing that the form in which an idea is conveyed is irrelevant to its truth. In the academic world, the published word is invested with greater prestige and authenticity than the spoken word. What people say is assumed to be more casually uttered than what they write. The written word is assumed to have been reflected upon and revised by its author, reviewed by authorities and editors. It is easier to verify or refute, and it is invested with an impersonal and objective character, which is why, no doubt, you have referred to yourself in your thesis as "the investigator" and not by your name; that is to say, the written word is, by its nature, addressed to the world, not an individual. The written word endures, the spoken word disappears; and that is why writing is closer to the truth than speaking. Moreover, we are sure you would prefer that this commission produce a written statement that you have passed your examination (should you do so) than for us merely to tell you that you have, and leave it at that. Our written statement would represent the "truth." Our oral agreement would be only a rumor.

The candidate wisely said no more on the matter except to indicate that he would make whatever changes the commission suggested and that he profoundly wished that should he pass the "oral," a written document would attest to that fact. He did pass, and in time the proper words were written.

A third example of the influence of media on our epistemologies can be drawn from the trial of the great Socrates. At the opening of Socrates' defense, addressing a jury of five hundred, he apologizes for not having a well-prepared speech. He tells his Athenian brothers that he will falter, begs that they not interrupt him on that account, asks that they regard him as they

would a stranger from another city, and promises that he will tell them the truth, without adornment or eloquence. Beginning this way was, of course, characteristic of Socrates, but it was not characteristic of the age in which he lived. For, as Socrates knew full well, his Athenian brothers did not regard the principles of rhetoric and the expression of truth to be independent of each other. People like ourselves find great appeal in Socrates' plea because we are accustomed to thinking of rhetoric as an ornament of speech—most often pretentious, superficial and unnecessary. But to the people who invented it, the Sophists of fifth-century B.C. Greece and their heirs, rhetoric was not merely an opportunity for dramatic performance but a near indispensable means of organizing evidence and proofs, and therefore of communicating truth.⁶

It was not only a key element in the education of Athenians (far more important than philosophy) but a preeminent art form. To the Greeks, rhetoric was a form of spoken writing. Though it always implied oral performance, its power to reveal the truth resided in the written word's power to display arguments in orderly progression. Although Plato himself disputed this conception of truth (as we might guess from Socrates' plea), his contemporaries believed that rhetoric was the proper means through which "right opinion" was to be both discovered and articulated. To disdain rhetorical rules, to speak one's thoughts in a random manner, without proper emphasis or appropriate passion, was considered demeaning to the audience's intelligence and suggestive of falsehood. Thus, we can assume that many of the 280 jurors who cast a guilty ballot against Socrates did so because his manner was not consistent with truthful matter, as they understood the connection.

The point I am leading to by this and the previous examples is that the concept of truth is intimately linked to the biases of forms of expression. Truth does not, and never has, come unadorned. It must appear in its proper clothing or it is not acknowledged, which is a way of saying that the "truth" is a kind

of cultural prejudice. Each culture conceives of it as being most authentically expressed in certain symbolic forms that another culture may regard as trivial or irrelevant. Indeed, to the Greeks of Aristotle's time, and for two thousand years afterward, scientific truth was best discovered and expressed by deducing the nature of things from a set of self-evident premises, which accounts for Aristotle's believing that women have fewer teeth than men, and that babies are healthier if conceived when the wind is in the north. Aristotle was twice married but so far as we know, it did not occur to him to ask either of his wives if he could count her teeth. And as for his obstetric opinions, we are safe in assuming he used no questionnaires and hid behind no curtains. Such acts would have seemed to him both vulgar and unnecessary, for that was not the way to ascertain the truth of things. The language of deductive logic provided a surer road.

We must not be too hasty in mocking Aristotle's prejudices. We have enough of our own, as for example, the equation we moderns make of truth and quantification. In this prejudice, we come astonishingly close to the mystical beliefs of Pythagoras and his followers who attempted to submit all of life to the sovereignty of numbers. Many of our psychologists, sociologists, economists and other latter-day cabalists will have numbers to tell them the truth or they will have nothing. Can you imagine, for example, a modern economist articulating truths about our standard of living by reciting a poem? Or by telling what happened to him during a late-night walk through East St. Louis? Or by offering a series of proverbs and parables, beginning with the saying about a rich man, a camel, and the eye of a needle? The first would be regarded as irrelevant, the second merely anecdotal, the last childish. Yet these forms of language are certainly capable of expressing truths about economic relationships, as well as any other relationships, and indeed have been employed by various peoples. But to the modern mind, resonating with different media-metaphors, the truth in economics is believed to be best discovered and expressed in numbers. Per-

haps it is. I will not argue the point. I mean only to call attention to the fact that there is a certain measure of arbitrariness in the forms that truth-telling may take. We must remember that Galileo merely said that the language of *nature* is written in mathematics. He did not say *everything* is. And even the truth about nature need not be expressed in mathematics. For most of human history, the language of nature has been the language of myth and ritual. These forms, one might add, had the virtues of leaving nature unthreatened and of encouraging the belief that human beings are part of it. It hardly befits a people who stand ready to blow up the planet to praise themselves too vigorously for having found the true way to talk about nature.

In saying this, I am not making a case for epistemological relativism. Some ways of truth-telling are better than others, and therefore have a healthier influence on the cultures that adopt them. Indeed, I hope to persuade you that the decline of a print-based epistemology and the accompanying rise of a television-based epistemology has had grave consequences for public life, that we are getting sillier by the minute. And that is why it is necessary for me to drive hard the point that the weight assigned to any form of truth-telling is a function of the influence of media of communication. "Seeing is believing" has always had a preeminent status as an epistemological axiom, but "saying is believing," "reading is believing," "counting is believing," "deducing is believing," and "feeling is believing" are others that have risen or fallen in importance as cultures have undergone media change. As a culture moves from orality to writing to printing to televising, its ideas of truth move with it. Every philosophy is the philosophy of a stage of life, Nietzsche remarked. To which we might add that every epistemology is the epistemology of a stage of media development. Truth, like time itself, is a product of a conversation man has with himself about and through the techniques of communication he has invented.

Since intelligence is primarily defined as one's capacity to

grasp the truth of things, it follows that what a culture means by intelligence is derived from the character of its important forms of communication. In a purely oral culture, intelligence is often associated with aphoristic ingenuity, that is, the power to invent compact sayings of wide applicability. The wise Solomon, we are told in First Kings, knew three thousand proverbs. In a print culture, people with such a talent are thought to be quaint at best, more likely pompous bores. In a purely oral culture, a high value is always placed on the power to memorize, for where there are no written words, the human mind must function as a mobile library. To forget how something is to be said or done is a danger to the community and a gross form of stupidity. In a print culture, the memorization of a poem, a menu, a law or most anything else is merely charming. It is almost always functionally irrelevant and certainly not considered a sign of high intelligence.

Although the general character of print-intelligence would be known to anyone who would be reading this book, you may arrive at a reasonably detailed definition of it by simply considering what is demanded of you *as you read this book*. You are required, first of all, to remain more or less immobile for a fairly long time. If you cannot do this (with this or any other book), our culture may label you as anything from hyperkinetic to undisciplined; in any case, as suffering from some sort of intellectual deficiency. The printing press makes rather stringent demands on our bodies as well as our minds. Controlling your body is, however, only a minimal requirement. You must also have learned to pay no attention to the shapes of the letters on the page. You must see through them, so to speak, so that you can go directly to the meanings of the words they form. If you are preoccupied with the shapes of the letters, you will be an intolerably inefficient reader, likely to be thought stupid. If you have learned how to get to meanings without aesthetic distraction, you are required to assume an attitude of detachment and objectivity. This includes your bringing to the task what

Bertrand Russell called an "immunity to eloquence," meaning that you are able to distinguish between the sensuous pleasure, or charm, or ingratiating tone (if such there be) of the words, and the logic of their argument. But at the same time, you must be able to tell from the tone of the language what is the author's attitude toward the subject and toward the reader. You must, in other words, know the difference between a joke and an argument. And in judging the quality of an argument, you must be able to do several things at once, including delaying a verdict until the entire argument is finished, holding in mind questions until you have determined where, when or if the text answers them, and bringing to bear on the text all of your relevant experience as a counterargument to what is being proposed. You must also be able to withhold those parts of your knowledge and experience which, in fact, do not have a bearing on the argument. And in preparing yourself to do all of this, you must have divested yourself of the belief that words are magical and, above all, have learned to negotiate the world of abstractions, for there are very few phrases and sentences in this book that require you to call forth concrete images. In a print-culture, we are apt to say of people who are not intelligent that we must "draw them pictures" so that they may understand. Intelligence implies that one can dwell comfortably without pictures, in a field of concepts and generalizations.

To be able to do all of these things, and more, constitutes a primary definition of intelligence in a culture whose notions of truth are organized around the printed word. In the next two chapters I want to show that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, America was such a place, perhaps the most print-oriented culture ever to have existed. In subsequent chapters, I want to show that in the twentieth century, our notions of truth and our ideas of intelligence have changed as a result of new media displacing the old.

But I do not wish to oversimplify the matter more than is necessary. In particular, I want to conclude by making three

points that may serve as a defense against certain counterarguments that careful readers may have already formed.

The first is that at no point do I care to claim that changes in media bring about changes in the structure of people's minds or changes in their cognitive capacities. There are some who make this claim, or come close to it (for example, Jerome Bruner, Jack Goody, Walter Ong, Marshall McLuhan, Julian Jaynes, and Eric Havelock).⁷ I am inclined to think they are right, but my argument does not require it. Therefore, I will not burden myself with arguing the possibility, for example, that oral people are less developed intellectually, in some Piagetian sense, than writing people, or that "television" people are less developed intellectually than either. My argument is limited to saying that a major new medium changes the structure of discourse; it does so by encouraging certain uses of the intellect, by favoring certain definitions of intelligence and wisdom, and by demanding a certain kind of content—in a phrase, by creating new forms of truth-telling. I will say once again that I am no relativist in this matter, and that I believe the epistemology created by television not only is inferior to a print-based epistemology but is dangerous and absurdist.

The second point is that the epistemological shift I have intimated, and will describe in detail, has not yet included (and perhaps never will include) everyone and everything. While some old media do, in fact, disappear (e.g., pictographic writing and illuminated manuscripts) and with them, the institutions and cognitive habits they favored, other forms of conversation will always remain. Speech, for example, and writing. Thus the epistemology of new forms such as television does not have an entirely unchallenged influence.

I find it useful to think of the situation in this way: Changes in the symbolic environment are like changes in the natural environment; they are both gradual and additive at first, and then, all at once, a critical mass is achieved, as the physicists say. A river that has slowly been polluted suddenly becomes

toxic; most of the fish perish; swimming becomes a danger to health. But even then, the river may look the same and one may still take a boat ride on it. In other words, even when life has been taken from it, the river does not disappear, nor do all of its uses, but its value has been seriously diminished and its degraded condition will have harmful effects throughout the landscape. It is this way with our symbolic environment. We have reached, I believe, a critical mass in that electronic media have decisively and irreversibly changed the character of our symbolic environment. We are now a culture whose information, ideas and epistemology are given form by television, not by the printed word. To be sure, there are still readers and there are many books published, but the uses of print and reading are not the same as they once were; not even in schools, the last institutions where print was thought to be invincible. They delude themselves who believe that television and print coexist, for coexistence implies parity. There is no parity here. Print is now merely a residual epistemology, and it will remain so, aided to some extent by the computer, and newspapers and magazines that are made to look like television screens. Like the fish who survive a toxic river and the boatmen who sail on it, there still dwell among us those whose sense of things is largely influenced by older and clearer waters.

The third point is that in the analogy I have drawn above, the river refers largely to what we call public discourse—our political, religious, informational and commercial forms of conversation. I am arguing that a television-based epistemology pollutes public communication and its surrounding landscape, not that it pollutes everything. In the first place, I am constantly reminded of television's value as a source of comfort and pleasure to the elderly, the infirm and, indeed, all people who find themselves alone in motel rooms. I am also aware of television's potential for creating a theater for the masses (a subject which in my opinion has not been taken seriously enough). There are also claims that whatever power television might have to un-

dermine rational discourse, its emotional power is so great that it could arouse sentiment against the Vietnam War or against more virulent forms of racism. These and other beneficial possibilities are not to be taken lightly.

But there is still another reason why I should not like to be understood as making a total assault on television. Anyone who is even slightly familiar with the history of communications knows that every new technology for thinking involves a trade-off. It giveth and taketh away, although not quite in equal measure. Media change does not necessarily result in equilibrium. It sometimes creates more than it destroys. Sometimes, it is the other way around. We must be careful in praising or condemning because the future may hold surprises for us. The invention of the printing press itself is a paradigmatic example. Typography fostered the modern idea of individuality, but it destroyed the medieval sense of community and integration. Typography created prose but made poetry into an exotic and elitist form of expression. Typography made modern science possible but transformed religious sensibility into mere superstition. Typography assisted in the growth of the nation-state but thereby made patriotism into a sordid if not lethal emotion.

Obviously, my point of view is that the four-hundred-year imperial dominance of typography was of far greater benefit than deficit. Most of our modern ideas about the uses of the intellect were formed by the printed word, as were our ideas about education, knowledge, truth and information. I will try to demonstrate that as typography moves to the periphery of our culture and television takes its place at the center, the seriousness, clarity and, above all, value of public discourse dangerously declines. On what benefits may come from other directions, one must keep an open mind.

3.

Typographic America

In the *Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin*, there appears a remarkable quotation attributed to Michael Welfare, one of the founders of a religious sect known as the Dunkers and a long-time acquaintance of Franklin. The statement had its origins in Welfare's complaint to Franklin that zealots of other religious persuasions were spreading lies about the Dunkers, accusing them of abominable principles to which, in fact, they were utter strangers. Franklin suggested that such abuse might be diminished if the Dunkers published the articles of their belief and the rules of their discipline. Welfare replied that this course of action had been discussed among his co-religionists but had been rejected. He then explained their reasoning in the following words:

When we were first drawn together as a society, it had pleased God to enlighten our minds so far as to see that some doctrines, which we once esteemed truths, were errors, and that others, which we had esteemed errors, were real truths. From time to time He has been pleased to afford us farther light, and our principles have been improving, and our errors diminishing. Now we are not sure that we are arrived at the end of this progression, and at the perfection of spiritual or theological knowledge; and we fear that, if we should feel ourselves as if bound and confined by it, and perhaps be unwilling to receive further improvement, and our successors still more so, as conceiving what we their elders and founders had done, to be something sacred, never to be departed from.¹

Franklin describes this sentiment as a singular instance in the history of mankind of modesty in a sect. Modesty is certainly the word for it, but the statement is extraordinary for other reasons, too. We have here a criticism of the epistemology of the written word worthy of Plato. Moses himself might be interested although he could hardly approve. The Dunkers came close here to formulating a commandment about religious discourse: Thou shalt not write down thy principles, still less print them, lest thou shall be entrapped by them for all time.

We may, in any case, consider it a significant loss that we have no record of the deliberations of the Dunkers. It would certainly shed light on the premise of this book, i.e., that the form in which ideas are expressed affects what those ideas will be. But more important, their deliberations were in all likelihood a singular instance in Colonial America of a distrust of the printed word. For the Americans among whom Franklin lived were as committed to the printed word as any group of people who have ever lived. Whatever else may be said of those immigrants who came to settle in New England, it is a paramount fact that they and their heirs were dedicated and skillful readers whose religious sensibilities, political ideas and social life were embedded in the medium of typography.

We know that on the *Mayflower* itself several books were included as cargo, most importantly, the Bible and Captain John Smith's *Description of New England*. (For immigrants headed toward a largely uncharted land, we may suppose that the latter book was as carefully read as the former.) We know, too, that in the very first days of colonization each minister was given ten pounds with which to start a religious library. And although literacy rates are notoriously difficult to assess, there is sufficient evidence (mostly drawn from signatures) that between 1640 and 1700, the literacy rate for men in Massachusetts and Connecticut was somewhere between 89 percent and 95 percent, quite probably the highest concentration of literate males to be found anywhere in the world at that time.² (The literacy rate for

women in those colonies is estimated to have run as high as 62 percent in the years 1681–1697.³)

It is to be understood that the Bible was the central reading matter in all households, for these people were Protestants who shared Luther's belief that printing was "God's highest and extremest act of Grace, whereby the business of the Gospel is driven forward." Of course, the business of the Gospel may be driven forward in books other than the Bible, as for example in the famous *Bay Psalm Book*, printed in 1640 and generally regarded as America's first best seller. But it is not to be assumed that these people confined their reading to religious matters. Probate records indicate that 60 percent of the estates in Middlesex County between the years 1654 and 1699 contained books, all but 8 percent of them including more than the Bible.⁴ In fact, between 1682 and 1685, Boston's leading bookseller imported 3,421 books from *one* English dealer, most of these nonreligious books. The meaning of this fact may be appreciated when one adds that these books were intended for consumption by approximately 75,000 people then living in the northern colonies.⁵ The modern equivalent would be ten million books.

Aside from the fact that the religion of these Calvinist Puritans demanded that they be literate, three other factors account for the colonists' preoccupation with the printed word. Since the male literacy rate in seventeenth-century England did not exceed 40 percent, we may assume, first of all, that the migrants to New England came from more literate areas of England or from more literate segments of the population, or both.⁶ In other words, they came here as readers and were certain to believe that reading was as important in the New World as it was in the Old. Second, from 1650 onward almost all New England towns passed laws requiring the maintenance of a "reading and writing" school, the large communities being required to maintain a grammar school, as well.⁷ In all such laws, reference is made to Satan, whose evil designs, it was supposed, could be

thwarted at every turn by education. But there were other reasons why education was required, as suggested by the following ditty, popular in the seventeenth century:

*From public schools shall general
knowledge flow,
For 'tis the people's sacred
right to know.⁸*

These people, in other words, had more than the subjection of Satan on their minds. Beginning in the sixteenth century, a great epistemological shift had taken place in which knowledge of every kind was transferred to, and made manifest through, the printed page. "More than any other device," Lewis Mumford wrote of this shift, "the printed book released people from the domination of the immediate and the local; . . . print made a greater impression than actual events. . . . To exist was to exist in print: the rest of the world tended gradually to become more shadowy. Learning became book-learning."⁹ In light of this, we may assume that the schooling of the young was understood by the colonists not only as a moral duty but as an intellectual imperative. (The England from which they came was an island of schools. By 1660, for example, there were 444 schools in England, one school approximately every twelve miles.¹⁰) And it is clear that growth in literacy was closely connected to schooling. Where schooling was not required (as in Rhode Island) or weak school laws prevailed (as in New Hampshire), literacy rates increased more slowly than elsewhere.

Finally, these displaced Englishmen did not need to print their own books or even nurture their own writers. They imported, whole, a sophisticated literary tradition from their Motherland. In 1736, booksellers advertised the availability of the *Spectator*, the *Tatler*, and Steele's *Guardian*. In 1738, advertisements appeared for Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*, Pope's *Homer*, Swift's *A Tale of a Tub* and Dryden's

Fables.¹¹ Timothy Dwight, president of Yale University, described the American situation succinctly:

Books of almost every kind, on almost every subject, are already written to our hands. Our situation in this respect is singular. As we speak the same language with the people of Great Britain, and have usually been at peace with that country; our commerce with it brings to us, regularly, not a small part of the books with which it is deluged. In every art, science, and path of literature, we obtain those, which to a great extent supply our wants.¹²

One significant implication of this situation is that no literary aristocracy emerged in Colonial America. Reading was not regarded as an elitist activity, and printed matter was spread evenly among all kinds of people. A thriving, classless reading culture developed because, as Daniel Boorstin writes, "It was diffuse. Its center was everywhere because it was nowhere. Every man was close to what [printed matter] talked about. Everyone could speak the same language. It was the product of a busy, mobile, public society."¹³ By 1772, Jacob Duché could write: "The poorest labourer upon the shore of the Delaware thinks himself entitled to deliver his sentiment in matters of religion or politics with as much freedom as the gentleman or scholar. . . . Such is the prevailing taste for books of every kind, that almost every man is a reader."¹⁴

Where such a keen taste for books prevailed among the general population, we need not be surprised that Thomas Paine's *Common Sense*, published on January 10, 1776, sold more than 100,000 copies by March of the same year.¹⁵ In 1985, a book would have to sell eight million copies (in two months) to match the proportion of the population Paine's book attracted. If we go beyond March, 1776, a more awesome set of figures is given by Howard Fast: "No one knows just how many copies were actually printed. The most conservative sources place the figure at something over 300,000 copies. Others place it just

under half a million. Taking a figure of 400,000 in a population of 3,000,000, a book published today would have to sell 24,000,000 copies to do as well."¹⁶ The only communication event that could produce such collective attention in today's America is the Superbowl.

It is worth pausing here for a moment to say something of Thomas Paine, for in an important way he is a measure of the high and wide level of literacy that existed in his time. In particular, I want to note that in spite of his lowly origins, no question has ever been raised, as it has with Shakespeare, about whether or not Paine was, in fact, the author of the works attributed to him. It is true that we know more of Paine's life than Shakespeare's (although not more of Paine's early periods), but it is also true that Paine had less formal schooling than Shakespeare, and came from the lowest laboring class before he arrived in America. In spite of these disadvantages, Paine wrote political philosophy and polemics the equal in lucidity and vitality (although not quantity) of Voltaire's, Rousseau's, and contemporary English philosophers', including Edmund Burke. Yet no one asked the question, How could an unschooled stay-maker from England's impoverished class produce such stunning prose? From time to time Paine's lack of education was pointed out by his enemies (and he, himself, felt inferior because of this deficiency), but it was never doubted that such powers of written expression could originate from a common man.

It is also worth mentioning that the full title of Paine's most widely read book is *Common Sense, Written by an Englishman*. The tagline is important here because, as noted earlier, Americans did not write many books in the Colonial period, which Benjamin Franklin tried to explain by claiming that Americans were too busy doing other things. Perhaps so. But Americans were not too busy to make use of the printing press, even if not for books they themselves had written. The first printing press in America was established in 1638 as an adjunct of Harvard

University, which was two years old at the time.¹⁷ Presses were established shortly thereafter in Boston and Philadelphia without resistance by the Crown, a curious fact since at this time presses were not permitted in Liverpool and Birmingham, among other English cities.¹⁸ The earliest use of the press was for the printing of newsletters, mostly done on cheap paper. It may well be that the development of an American literature was retarded not by the industry of the people or the availability of English literature but by the scarcity of quality paper. As late as Revolutionary days, George Washington was forced to write to his generals on unsightly scraps of paper, and his dispatches were not enclosed in envelopes, paper being too scarce for such use.¹⁹

Yet by the late seventeenth century, there was a beginning to a native literature that turned out to have as much to do with the typographic bias of American culture as books. I refer, of course, to the newspaper, at which Americans first tried their hand on September 25, 1690, in Boston, when Benjamin Harris printed the first edition of a three-page paper he called *Publick Occurrences Both Foreign and Domestick*. Before he came to America, Harris had played a role in "exposing" a nonexistent conspiracy of Catholics to slaughter Protestants and burn London. His London newspaper, *Domestick Intelligence*, revealed the "Popish plot," with the result that Catholics were harshly persecuted.²⁰ Harris, no stranger to mendacity, indicated in his prospectus for *Publick Occurrences* that a newspaper was necessary to combat the spirit of lying which then prevailed in Boston and, I am told, still does. He concluded his prospectus with the following sentence: "It is suppos'd that none will dislike this Proposal but such as intend to be guilty of so villainous a crime." Harris was right about who would dislike his proposal. The second issue of *Publick Occurrences* never appeared. The Governor and Council suppressed it, complaining that Harris had printed "reflections of a very high nature,"²¹ by which they meant that they had no intention of admitting any impedi-

ments to whatever villainy they wished to pursue. Thus, in the New World began the struggle for freedom of information which, in the Old, had begun a century before.

Harris' abortive effort inspired other attempts at newspaper publication: for example, the *Boston News-Letter*, published in 1704, generally regarded as the first continuously published American newspaper. This was followed by the *Boston Gazette* (in 1719) and the *New-England Courant* (in 1721), whose editor, James Franklin, was the older brother of Benjamin. By 1730, there were seven newspapers published regularly in four colonies, and by 1800 there were more than 180. In 1770, the *New York Gazette* congratulated itself and other papers by writing (in part):

*'Tis truth (with deference to the college)
Newspapers are the spring of Knowledge,
The general source throughout the nation,
Of every modern conversation.*²²

At the end of the eighteenth century, the Reverend Samuel Miller boasted that the United States had more than two-thirds the number of newspapers available in England, and yet had only half the population of England.²³

In 1786, Benjamin Franklin observed that Americans were so busy reading newspapers and pamphlets that they scarcely had time for books. (One book they apparently always had time for was Noah Webster's *American Spelling Book*, for it sold more than 24 million copies between 1783 and 1843.)²⁴ Franklin's reference to pamphlets ought not to go unnoticed. The proliferation of newspapers in all the Colonies was accompanied by the rapid diffusion of pamphlets and broadsides. Alexis de Tocqueville took note of this fact in his *Democracy in America*, published in 1835: "In America," he wrote, "parties do not write books to combat each other's opinions, but pamphlets, which are circulated for a day with incredible rapidity and then expire."²⁵ And

he referred to both newspapers and pamphlets when he observed, "the invention of firearms equalized the vassal and the noble on the field of battle; the art of printing opened the same resources to the minds of all classes; the post brought knowledge alike to the door of the cottage and to the gate of the palace."²⁶

At the time Tocqueville was making his observations of America, printing had already spread to all the regions of the country. The South had lagged behind the North not only in the formation of schools (almost all of which were private rather than public) but in its uses of the printing press. Virginia, for example, did not get its first regularly published newspaper, the *Virginia Gazette*, until 1736. But toward the end of the eighteenth century, the movement of ideas via the printed word was relatively rapid, and something approximating a national conversation emerged. For example, the *Federalist Papers*, an outpouring of eighty-five essays written by Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay (all under the name of Publius) originally appeared in a New York newspaper during 1787 and 1788 but were read almost as widely in the South as the North.

As America moved into the nineteenth century, it did so as a fully print-based culture in all of its regions. Between 1825 and 1850, the number of subscription libraries trebled.²⁷ What were called "mechanics' and apprentices' libraries"—that is, libraries intended for the working class—also emerged as a force for literacy. In 1829, the New York Apprentices' Library housed ten thousand volumes, of which 1,600 apprentices drew books. By 1857, the same library served three-quarters of a million people.²⁸ Aided by Congress' lowering of the postal rates in 1851, the penny newspaper, the periodical, the Sunday school tract, and the cheaply bound book were abundantly available. Between 1836 and 1890, 107 million copies of the *McGuffey Reader* were distributed to the schools.²⁹ And although the reading of novels was not considered an altogether reputable use of time, Americans devoured them. Of Walter Scott's novels, published

between 1814 and 1832, Samuel Goodrich wrote: "The appearance of a new novel from his pen caused a greater sensation in the United States than did some of the battles of Napoleon. . . . Everybody read these works; everybody—the refined and the simple."³⁰ Publishers were so anxious to make prospective best sellers available, they would sometimes dispatch messengers to incoming packet boats and "within a single day set up, printed and bound in paper covers the most recent novel of Bulwer or Dickens."³¹ There being no international copyright laws, "pirated" editions abounded, with no complaint from the public, or much from authors, who were lionized. When Charles Dickens visited America in 1842, his reception equaled the adulation we offer today to television stars, quarterbacks, and Michael Jackson. "I can give you no conception of my welcome," Dickens wrote to a friend. "There never was a King or Emperor upon earth so cheered and followed by the crowds, and entertained at splendid balls and dinners and waited upon by public bodies of all kinds. . . . If I go out in a carriage, the crowd surrounds it and escorts me home; if I go to the theater, the whole house . . . rises as one man and the timbers ring again."³² A native daughter, Harriet Beecher Stowe, was not offered the same kind of adoring attention—and, of course, in the South, had her carriage been surrounded, it would not have been for the purpose of escorting her home—but her *Uncle Tom's Cabin* sold 305,000 copies in its first year, the equivalent of four million in today's America.

Alexis de Tocqueville was not the only foreign visitor to be impressed by the Americans' immersion in printed matter. During the nineteenth century, scores of Englishmen came to America to see for themselves what had become of the Colonies. All were impressed with the high level of literacy and in particular its extension to all classes.³³

In addition, they were astounded by the near universality of lecture halls in which stylized oral performance provided a continuous reinforcement of the print tradition. Many of these lec-

ture halls originated as a result of the Lyceum Movement, a form of adult education. Usually associated with the efforts of Josiah Holbrook, a New England farmer, the Lyceum Movement had as its purpose the diffusion of knowledge, the promotion of common schools, the creation of libraries and, especially, the establishment of lecture halls. By 1835, there were more than three thousand Lyceums in fifteen states.³⁴ Most of these were located east of the Alleghenies, but by 1840, they were to be found at the edges of the frontier, as far west as Iowa and Minnesota. Alfred Bunn, an Englishman on an extensive tour through America, reported in 1853 that "practically every village had its lecture hall."³⁵ He added: "It is a matter of wonderment . . . to witness the youthful workmen, the over-tired artisan, the worn-out factory girl . . . rushing . . . after the toil of the day is over, into the hot atmosphere of a crowded lecture room."³⁶ Bunn's countryman J. F. W. Johnston attended lectures at this time at the Smithsonian Institution and "found the lecture halls jammed with capacity audiences of 1200 and 1500 people."³⁷ Among the lecturers these audiences could hear were the leading intellectuals, writers and humorists (who were also writers) of their time, including Henry Ward Beecher, Horace Greeley, Louis Agassiz and Ralph Waldo Emerson (whose fee for a lecture was fifty dollars).³⁸ In his autobiography, Mark Twain devotes two chapters to his experiences as a lecturer on the Lyceum circuit. "I began as a lecturer in 1866 in California and Nevada," he wrote. "[I] lectured in New York once and in the Mississippi Valley a few times; in 1868 [I] made the whole Western circuit; and in the two or three following seasons added the Eastern circuit to my route."³⁹ Apparently, Emerson was underpaid since Twain remarks that some lecturers charged as much as \$250 when they spoke in towns and \$400 when they spoke in cities (which is almost as much, in today's terms, as the going price for a lecture by a retired television newscaster).

The point all this is leading to is that from its beginning until

well into the nineteenth century, America was as dominated by the printed word and an oratory based on the printed word as any society we know of. This situation was only in part a legacy of the Protestant tradition. As Richard Hofstadter reminds us, America was founded by intellectuals, a rare occurrence in the history of modern nations. "The Founding Fathers," he writes, "were sages, scientists, men of broad cultivation, many of them apt in classical learning, who used their wide reading in history, politics, and law to solve the exigent problems of their time."⁴⁰ A society shaped by such men does not easily move in contrary directions. We might even say that America was founded by intellectuals, from which it has taken us two centuries and a communications revolution to recover. Hofstadter has written convincingly of our efforts to "recover," that is to say, of the anti-intellectual strain in American public life, but he concedes that his focus distorts the general picture. It is akin to writing a history of American business by concentrating on the history of bankruptcies.⁴¹

The influence of the printed word in every arena of public discourse was insistent and powerful not merely because of the quantity of printed matter but because of its *monopoly*. This point cannot be stressed enough, especially for those who are reluctant to acknowledge profound differences in the media environments of then and now. One sometimes hears it said, for example, that there is more printed matter available today than ever before, which is undoubtedly true. But from the seventeenth century to the late nineteenth century, printed matter was virtually *all* that was available. There were no movies to see, radio to hear, photographic displays to look at, records to play. There was no television. Public business was channeled into and expressed through print, which became the model, the metaphor and the measure of all discourse. The resonances of the lineal, analytical structure of print, and in particular, of expository prose, could be felt everywhere. For example, in how people talked. Tocqueville remarks on this in *Democracy in*

America. "An American," he wrote, "cannot converse, but he can discuss, and his talk falls into a dissertation. He speaks to you as if he was addressing a meeting; and if he should chance to become warm in the discussion, he will say 'Gentlemen' to the person with whom he is conversing."⁴² This odd practice is less a reflection of an American's obstinacy than of his modeling his conversational style on the structure of the printed word. Since the printed word is impersonal and is addressed to an invisible audience, what Tocqueville is describing here is a kind of printed orality, which was observable in diverse forms of oral discourse. On the pulpit, for example, sermons were usually written speeches delivered in a stately, impersonal tone consisting "largely of an impassioned, coldly analytical cataloguing of the attributes of the Deity as revealed to man through Nature and Nature's Laws."⁴³ And even when The Great Awakening came—a revivalist movement that challenged the analytical, dispassionate spirit of Deism—its highly emotional preachers used an oratory that could be transformed easily to the printed page. The most charismatic of these men was the Reverend George Whitefield, who beginning in 1739 preached all over America to large crowds. In Philadelphia, he addressed an audience of ten thousand people, whom he deeply stirred and alarmed by assuring them of eternal hellfire if they refused to accept Christ. Benjamin Franklin witnessed one of Whitefield's performances and responded by offering to become his publisher. In due time, Whitefield's journals and sermons were published by B. Franklin of Philadelphia.⁴⁴

But obviously I do not mean to say that print merely influenced the form of public discourse. That does not say much unless one connects it to the more important idea that form will determine the nature of content. For those readers who may believe that this idea is too "McLuhanesque" for their taste, I offer Karl Marx from *The German Ideology*. "Is the *Iliad* possible," he asks rhetorically, "when the printing press and even printing machines exist? Is it not inevitable that with the emer-

gence of the press, the singing and the telling and the muse cease; that is, the conditions necessary for epic poetry disappear?"⁴⁵ Marx understood well that the press was not merely a machine but a structure for discourse, which both rules out and insists upon certain kinds of content and, inevitably, a certain kind of audience. He did not, himself, fully explore the matter, and others have taken up the task. I too must try my hand at it—to explore how the press worked as a metaphor and an epistemology to create a serious and rational public conversation, from which we have now been so dramatically separated.

4.

The Typographic Mind

The first of the seven famous debates between Abraham Lincoln and Stephen A. Douglas took place on August 21, 1858, in Ottawa, Illinois. Their arrangement provided that Douglas would speak first, for one hour; Lincoln would take an hour and a half to reply; Douglas, a half hour to rebut Lincoln's reply. This debate was considerably shorter than those to which the two men were accustomed. In fact, they had tangled several times before, and all of their encounters had been much lengthier and more exhausting. For example, on October 16, 1854, in Peoria, Illinois, Douglas delivered a three-hour address to which Lincoln, by agreement, was to respond. When Lincoln's turn came, he reminded the audience that it was already 5 p.m., that he would probably require as much time as Douglas and that Douglas was still scheduled for a rebuttal. He proposed, therefore, that the audience go home, have dinner, and return refreshed for four more hours of talk.¹ The audience amiably agreed, and matters proceeded as Lincoln had outlined.

What kind of audience was this? Who were these people who could so cheerfully accommodate themselves to seven hours of oratory? It should be noted, by the way, that Lincoln and Douglas were not presidential candidates; at the time of their encounter in Peoria they were not even candidates for the United States Senate. But their audiences were not especially concerned with their official status. These were people who regarded such events as essential to their political education, who took them to be an integral part of their social lives, and who

were quite accustomed to extended oratorical performances. Typically at county or state fairs, programs included many speakers, most of whom were allotted three hours for their arguments. And since it was preferred that speakers not go unanswered, their opponents were allotted an equal length of time. (One might add that the speakers were not always men. At one fair lasting several days in Springfield, "Each evening a woman [lectured] in the courtroom on 'Woman's Influence in the Great Progressive Movements of the Day.'" ²)

Moreover, these people did not rely on fairs or special events to get their fill of oratory. The tradition of the "stump" speaker was widely practiced, especially in the western states. By the stump of a felled tree or some equivalent open space, a speaker would gather an audience, and, as the saying had it, "take the stump" for two or three hours. Although audiences were mostly respectful and attentive, they were not quiet or unemotional. Throughout the Lincoln-Douglas debates, for example, people shouted encouragement to the speakers ("You tell 'em, Abe!") or voiced terse expressions of scorn ("Answer that one, if you can"). Applause was frequent, usually reserved for a humorous or elegant phrase or a cogent point. At the first debate in Ottawa, Douglas responded to lengthy applause with a remarkable and revealing statement. "My friends," he said, "silence will be more acceptable to me in the discussion of these questions than applause. I desire to address myself to your judgment, your understanding, and your consciences, and not to your passions or your enthusiasms." ³ As to the conscience of the audience, or even its judgment, it is difficult to say very much. But as to its understanding, a great deal can be assumed.

For one thing, its attention span would obviously have been extraordinary by current standards. Is there any audience of Americans today who could endure seven hours of talk? or five? or three? Especially without pictures of any kind? Second, these audiences must have had an equally extraordinary capacity to comprehend lengthy and complex sentences aurally. In

Douglas' Ottawa speech he included in his one-hour address three long, legally phrased resolutions of the Abolition platform. Lincoln, in his reply, read even longer passages from a published speech he had delivered on a previous occasion. For all of Lincoln's celebrated economy of style, his sentence structure in the debates was intricate and subtle, as was Douglas'. In the second debate, at Freeport, Illinois, Lincoln rose to answer Douglas in the following words:

It will readily occur to you that I cannot, in half an hour, notice all the things that so able a man as Judge Douglas can say in an hour and a half; and I hope, therefore, if there be anything that he has said upon which you would like to hear something from me, but which I omit to comment upon, you will bear in mind that it would be expecting an impossibility for me to cover his whole ground.⁴

It is hard to imagine the present occupant of the White House being capable of constructing such clauses in similar circumstances. And if he were, he would surely do so at the risk of burdening the comprehension or concentration of his audience. People of a television culture need "plain language" both aurally and visually, and will even go so far as to require it in some circumstances by law. The Gettysburg Address would probably have been largely incomprehensible to a 1985 audience.

The Lincoln-Douglas audience apparently had a considerable grasp of the issues being debated, including knowledge of historical events and complex political matters. At Ottawa, Douglas put seven interrogatives to Lincoln, all of which would have been rhetorically pointless unless the audience was familiar with the Dred Scott decision, the quarrel between Douglas and President Buchanan, the disaffection of some Democrats, the Abolition platform, and Lincoln's famous "House divided" speech at Cooper Union. Further, in answering Douglas' questions in a later debate, Lincoln made a subtle distinction be-

tween what he was, or was not, "pledged" to uphold and what he actually believed, which he surely would not have attempted unless he assumed the audience could grasp his point. Finally, while both speakers employed some of the more simple-minded weapons of argumentative language (e.g., name-calling and bombastic generalities), they consistently drew upon more complex rhetorical resources—sarcasm, irony, paradox, elaborated metaphors, fine distinctions and the exposure of contradiction, none of which would have advanced their respective causes unless the audience was fully aware of the means being employed.

It would be false, however, to give the impression that these 1858 audiences were models of intellectual propriety. All of the Lincoln-Douglas debates were conducted amid a carnival-like atmosphere. Bands played (although not during the debates), hawkers sold their wares, children romped, liquor was available. These were important social events as well as rhetorical performances, but this did not trivialize them. As I have indicated, these audiences were made up of people whose intellectual lives and public business were fully integrated into their social world. As Winthrop Hudson has pointed out, even Methodist camp meetings combined picnics with opportunities to listen to oratory.⁵ Indeed, most of the camp grounds originally established for religious inspiration—Chautauqua, New York; Ocean Grove, New Jersey; Bayview, Michigan; Junaluska, North Carolina—were eventually transformed into conference centers, serving educational and intellectual functions. In other words, the use of language as a means of complex argument was an important, pleasurable and common form of discourse in almost every public arena.

To understand the audience to whom Lincoln and Douglas directed their memorable language, we must remember that these people were the grandsons and granddaughters of the Enlightenment (American version). They were the progeny of Franklin, Jefferson, Madison and Tom Paine, the inheritors of

the Empire of Reason, as Henry Steele Commager has called eighteenth-century America. It is true that among their number were frontiersmen, some of whom were barely literate, and immigrants to whom English was still strange. It is also true that by 1858, the photograph and telegraph had been invented, the advance guard of a new epistemology that would put an end to the Empire of Reason. But this would not become evident until the twentieth century. At the time of the Lincoln-Douglas debates, America was in the middle years of its most glorious literary outpouring. In 1858, Edwin Markham was six years old; Mark Twain was twenty-three; Emily Dickinson, twenty-eight; Whitman and James Russell Lowell, thirty-nine; Thoreau, forty-one; Melville, forty-five; Whittier and Longfellow, fifty-one; Hawthorne and Emerson, fifty-four and fifty-five; Poe had died nine years before.

I choose the Lincoln-Douglas debates as a starting point for this chapter not only because they were the preeminent example of political discourse in the mid-nineteenth century but also because they illustrate the power of typography to control the character of that discourse. Both the speakers and their audience were habituated to a kind of oratory that may be described as literary. For all of the hoopla and socializing surrounding the event, the speakers had little to offer, and audiences little to expect, but language. And the language that was offered was clearly modeled on the style of the written word. To anyone who has read what Lincoln and Douglas said, this is obvious from beginning to end. The debates opened, in fact, with Douglas making the following introduction, highly characteristic of everything that was said afterward:

Ladies and Gentlemen: I appear before you today for the purpose of discussing the leading political topics which now agitate the public mind. By an arrangement between Mr. Lincoln and myself, we are present here today for the purpose of having a joint discussion, as the representatives of the two great political parties of the

State and Union, upon the principles in issue between those parties, and this vast concourse of people shows the deep feeling which pervades the public mind in regard to the questions dividing us.⁶

This language is pure print. That the occasion required it to be spoken aloud cannot obscure that fact. And that the audience was able to process it through the ear is remarkable only to people whose culture no longer resonates powerfully with the printed word. Not only did Lincoln and Douglas write all their speeches in advance, but they also planned their rebuttals in writing. Even the spontaneous interactions between the speakers were expressed in a sentence structure, sentence length and rhetorical organization which took their form from writing. To be sure, there were elements of pure orality in their presentations. After all, neither speaker was indifferent to the moods of the audiences. Nonetheless, the resonance of typography was ever-present. Here was argument and counterargument, claim and counterclaim, criticism of relevant texts, the most careful scrutiny of the previously uttered sentences of one's opponent. In short, the Lincoln-Douglas debates may be described as expository prose lifted whole from the printed page. That is the meaning of Douglas' reproach to the audience. He claimed that his appeal was to understanding and not to passion, as if the audience were to be silent, reflective readers, and his language the text which they must ponder. Which brings us, of course, to the questions, What are the implications for public discourse of a written, or typographic, metaphor? What is the character of its content? What does it demand of the public? What uses of the mind does it favor?

One must begin, I think, by pointing to the obvious fact that the written word, and an oratory based upon it, *has a content*: a semantic, paraphrasable, propositional content. This may sound odd, but since I shall be arguing soon enough that much of our discourse today has only a marginal propositional con-

tent, I must stress the point here. Whenever language is the principal medium of communication—especially language controlled by the rigors of print—an idea, a fact, a claim is the inevitable result. The idea may be banal, the fact irrelevant, the claim false, but there is no escape from meaning when language is the instrument guiding one's thought. Though one may accomplish it from time to time, it is very hard to say nothing when employing a written English sentence. What else is exposition good for? Words have very little to recommend them except as carriers of meaning. The shapes of written words are not especially interesting to look at. Even the sounds of sentences of spoken words are rarely engaging except when composed by those with extraordinary poetic gifts. If a sentence refuses to issue forth a fact, a request, a question, an assertion, an explanation, it is nonsense, a mere grammatical shell. As a consequence a language-centered discourse such as was characteristic of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century America tends to be both content-laden and serious, all the more so when it takes its form from print.

It is serious because meaning demands to be understood. A written sentence calls upon its author to say something, upon its reader to know the import of what is said. And when an author and reader are struggling with semantic meaning, they are engaged in the most serious challenge to the intellect. This is especially the case with the act of reading, for authors are not always trustworthy. They lie, they become confused, they overgeneralize, they abuse logic and, sometimes, common sense. The reader must come armed, in a serious state of intellectual readiness. This is not easy because he comes to the text alone. In reading, one's responses are isolated, one's intellect thrown back on its own resources. To be confronted by the cold abstractions of printed sentences is to look upon language bare, without the assistance of either beauty or community. Thus, reading is by its nature a serious business. It is also, of course, an essentially rational activity.

From Erasmus in the sixteenth century to Elizabeth Eisenstein in the twentieth, almost every scholar who has grappled with the question of what reading does to one's habits of mind has concluded that the process encourages rationality; that the sequential, propositional character of the written word fosters what Walter Ong calls the "analytic management of knowledge." To engage the written word means to follow a line of thought, which requires considerable powers of classifying, inference-making and reasoning. It means to uncover lies, confusions, and overgeneralizations, to detect abuses of logic and common sense. It also means to weigh ideas, to compare and contrast assertions, to connect one generalization to another. To accomplish this, one must achieve a certain distance from the words themselves, which is, in fact, encouraged by the isolated and impersonal text. That is why a good reader does not cheer an apt sentence or pause to applaud even an inspired paragraph. Analytic thought is too busy for that, and too detached.

I do not mean to imply that prior to the written word analytic thought was not possible. I am referring here not to the potentialities of the individual mind but to the predispositions of a cultural mind-set. In a culture dominated by print, public discourse tends to be characterized by a coherent, orderly arrangement of facts and ideas. The public for whom it is intended is generally competent to manage such discourse. In a print culture, writers make mistakes when they lie, contradict themselves, fail to support their generalizations, try to enforce illogical connections. In a print culture, readers make mistakes when they don't notice, or even worse, don't care.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, print put forward a definition of intelligence that gave priority to the objective, rational use of the mind and at the same time encouraged forms of public discourse with serious, logically ordered content. It is no accident that the Age of Reason was coexistent with the growth of a print culture, first in Europe and then in America. The spread of typography kindled the hope that the world and

its manifold mysteries could at least be comprehended, predicted, controlled. It is in the eighteenth century that science—the preeminent example of the analytic management of knowledge—begins its refashioning of the world. It is in the eighteenth century that capitalism is demonstrated to be a rational and liberal system of economic life, that religious superstition comes under furious attack, that the divine right of kings is shown to be a mere prejudice, that the idea of continuous progress takes hold, and that the necessity of universal literacy through education becomes apparent.

Perhaps the most optimistic expression of everything that typography implied is contained in the following paragraph from John Stuart Mill's autobiography:

So complete was my father's reliance on the influence of mankind, wherever [literacy] is allowed to reach them, that he felt as if all would be gained if the whole population were taught to read, if all sorts of opinions were allowed to be addressed to them by word and in writing, and if, by means of the suffrage, they could nominate a legislature to give effect to the opinion they adopted.⁷

This was, of course, a hope never quite realized. At no point in the history of England or America (or anyplace else) has the dominion of reason been so total as the elder Mill imagined typography would allow. Nonetheless, it is not difficult to demonstrate that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, American public discourse, being rooted in the bias of the printed word, was serious, inclined toward rational argument and presentation, and, therefore, made up of meaningful content.

Let us take religious discourse as an illustration of this point. In the eighteenth century believers were as much influenced by the rationalist tradition as anyone else. The New World offered freedom of religion to all, which implied that no force other than reason itself could be employed to bring light to the unbeliever. "Here Deism will have its full chance," said Ezra Stiles

in one of his famous sermons in 1783. "Nor need libertines [any] more to complain of being overcome by any weapons but the gentle, the powerful ones of argument and truth."⁸

Leaving aside the libertines, we know that the Deists were certainly given their full chance. It is quite probable, in fact, that the first four presidents of the United States were Deists. Jefferson, certainly, did not believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ and, while he was President, wrote a version of the Four Gospels from which he removed all references to "fantastic" events, retaining only the ethical content of Jesus' teaching. Legend has it that when Jefferson was elected President, old women hid their Bibles and shed tears. What they might have done had Tom Paine become President or been offered some high post in the government is hard to imagine. In *The Age of Reason*, Paine attacked the Bible and all subsequent Christian theology. Of Jesus Christ, Paine allowed that he was a virtuous and amiable man but charged that the stories of his divinity were absurd and profane, which, in the way of the rationalist, he tried to prove by a close textual analysis of the Bible. "All national institutions of churches," he wrote, "whether Jewish, Christian or Turkish, appear to me no other than human inventions, set up to terrify and enslave mankind, and monopolize power and profit."⁹ Because of *The Age of Reason*, Paine lost his standing among the pantheon of Founding Fathers (and to this day is treated ambiguously in American history textbooks). But Ezra Stiles did not say that libertines and Deists would be *loved*: only that with reason as their jury, they would have their say in an open court. As indeed they did. Assisted by the initial enthusiasms evoked by the French Revolution, the Deist attack on churches as enemies of progress and on religious superstition as enemy of rationality became a popular movement.¹⁰ The churches fought back, of course, and when Deism ceased to attract interest, they fought among themselves. Toward the mid-eighteenth century, Theodore Frelinghuysen and William Tennent led a revivalist movement among Presbyterians. They were followed by the

three great figures associated with religious "awakenings" in America—Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, and, later in the nineteenth century, Charles Finney.

These men were spectacularly successful preachers, whose appeal reached regions of consciousness far beyond where reason rules. Of Whitefield, it was said that by merely pronouncing the word "Mesopotamia," he evoked tears in his audience. Perhaps that is why Henry Coswell remarked in 1839 that "religious mania is said to be the prevailing form of insanity in the United States."¹¹ Yet it is essential to bear in mind that quarrels over doctrine between the revivalist movements of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries and the established churches fiercely opposed to them were argued in pamphlets and books in largely rational, logically ordered language. It would be a serious mistake to think of Billy Graham or any other television revivalist as a latter-day Jonathan Edwards or Charles Finney. Edwards was one of the most brilliant and creative minds ever produced by America. His contribution to aesthetic theory was almost as important as his contribution to theology. His interests were mostly academic; he spent long hours each day in his study. He did not speak to his audiences extemporaneously. He *read* his sermons, which were tightly knit and closely reasoned expositions of theological doctrine.¹² Audiences may have been moved emotionally by Edwards' language, but they were, first and foremost, required to understand it. Indeed Edwards' fame was largely a result of a book, *Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God in the Conversion of Many Hundred Souls in Northampton*, published in 1737. A later book, *A Treatise Concerning Religious Affections*, published in 1746, is considered to be among the most remarkable psychological studies ever produced in America.

Unlike the principal figures in today's "great awakening"—Oral Roberts, Jerry Falwell, Jimmy Swaggart, et al.—yesterday's leaders of revivalist movements in America were men of learning, faith in reason, and generous expository gifts. Their

disputes with the religious establishments were as much about theology and the nature of consciousness as they were about religious inspiration. Finney, for example, was no "backcountry rustic," as he was sometimes characterized by his doctrinal opponents.¹³ He had been trained as a lawyer, wrote an important book on systematic theology, and ended his career as a professor at and then president of Oberlin College.

The doctrinal disputes among religionists not only were argued in carefully drawn exposition in the eighteenth century, but in the nineteenth century were settled by the extraordinary expedient of founding colleges. It is sometimes forgotten that the churches in America laid the foundation of our system of higher education. Harvard, of course, was established early—in 1636—for the purpose of providing learned ministers to the Congregational Church. And, sixty-five years later, when Congregationalists quarreled among themselves over doctrine, Yale College was founded to correct the lax influences of Harvard (and, to this day, claims it has the same burden). The strong intellectual strain of the Congregationalists was matched by other denominations, certainly in their passion for starting colleges. The Presbyterians founded, among other schools, the University of Tennessee in 1784, Washington and Jefferson in 1802 and Lafayette in 1826. The Baptists founded, among others, Colgate (1817), George Washington (1821), Furman (1826), Denison (1832) and Wake Forest (1834). The Episcopalians founded Hobart (1822), Trinity (1823) and Kenyon (1824). The Methodists founded eight colleges between 1830 and 1851, including Wesleyan, Emory, and Depauw. In addition to Harvard and Yale, the Congregationalists founded Williams (1793), Middlebury (1800), Amherst (1821) and Oberlin (1833).

If this preoccupation with literacy and learning be a "form of insanity," as Coswell said of religious life in America, then let there be more of it. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, religious thought and institutions in America were dominated

by an austere, learned, and intellectual form of discourse that is largely absent from religious life today. No clearer example of the difference between earlier and modern forms of public discourse can be found than in the contrast between the theological arguments of Jonathan Edwards and those of, say, Jerry Falwell, or Billy Graham, or Oral Roberts. The formidable content to Edwards' theology must inevitably engage the intellect; if there is such a content to the theology of the television evangelicals, they have not yet made it known.

The differences between the character of discourse in a print-based culture and the character of discourse in a television-based culture are also evident if one looks at the legal system.

In a print-based culture, lawyers tended to be well educated, devoted to reason, and capable of impressive expository argument. It is a matter frequently overlooked in histories of America that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the legal profession represented "a sort of privileged body in the scale of intellect," as Tocqueville remarked. Folk heroes were made of some of those lawyers, like Sergeant Prentiss of Alabama, or "Honest" Abe Lincoln of Illinois, whose craftiness in manipulating juries was highly theatrical, not unlike television's version of a trial lawyer. But the great figures of American jurisprudence—John Marshall, Joseph Story, James Kent, David Hoffman, William Wirt and Daniel Webster—were models of intellectual elegance and devotion to rationality and scholarship. They believed that democracy, for all of its obvious virtues, posed the danger of releasing an undisciplined individualism. Their aspiration was to save civilization in America by "creating a rationality for the law."¹⁴ As a consequence of this exalted view, they believed that law must not be merely a learned profession but a liberal one. The famous law professor Job Tyson argued that a lawyer must be familiar with the works of Seneca, Cicero, and Plato.¹⁵ George Sharswood, perhaps envisioning the degraded state of legal education in the twentieth century, remarked in 1854 that to read law exclusively will damage the

mind, "shackle it to the technicalities with which it has become so familiar, and disable it from taking enlarged and comprehensive views even of topics falling within its compass."¹⁶

The insistence on a liberal, rational and articulate legal mind was reinforced by the fact that America had a written constitution, as did all of its component states, and that law did not grow by chance but was explicitly formulated. A lawyer needed to be a writing and reading man par excellence, for reason was the principal authority upon which legal questions were to be decided. John Marshall was, of course, the great "paragon of reason, as vivid a symbol to the American imagination as Natty Bumppo."¹⁷ He was the preeminent example of Typographic Man—detached, analytical, devoted to logic, abhorring contradiction. It was said of him that he never used analogy as a principal support of his arguments. Rather, he introduced most of his decisions with the phrase "It is admitted. . . ." Once one admitted his premises, one was usually forced to accept his conclusion.

To an extent difficult to imagine today, earlier Americans were familiar not only with the great legal issues of their time but even with the language famous lawyers had used to argue their cases. This was especially true of Daniel Webster, and it was only natural that Stephen Vincent Benét in his famous short story would have chosen Daniel Webster to contend with the Devil. How could the Devil triumph over a man whose language, described by Supreme Court Justice Joseph Story, had the following characteristics?

. . . his clearness and downright simplicity of statement, his vast comprehensiveness of topics, his fertility in illustrations drawn from practical sources; his keen analysis, and suggestion of difficulties; his power of disentangling a complicated proposition, and resolving it in elements so plain as to reach the most common minds; his vigor in generalizations, planting his own arguments behind the whole battery of his opponents; his wariness and cau-

tion not to betray himself by heat into untenable positions, or to spread his forces over useless ground.¹⁸

I quote this in full because it is the best nineteenth-century description I know of the character of discourse expected of one whose mind is formed by the printed word. It is exactly the ideal and model James Mill had in mind in prophesying about the wonders of typography. And if the model was somewhat unreachable, it stood nonetheless as an ideal to which every lawyer aspired.

Such an ideal went far beyond the legal profession or the ministry in its influence. Even in the everyday world of commerce, the resonances of rational, typographic discourse were to be found. If we may take advertising to be the voice of commerce, then its history tells very clearly that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries those with products to sell took their customers to be not unlike Daniel Webster: they assumed that potential buyers were literate, rational, analytical. Indeed, the history of newspaper advertising in America may be considered, all by itself, as a metaphor of the descent of the typographic mind, beginning, as it does, with reason, and ending, as it does, with entertainment. In Frank Presbrey's classic study *The History and Development of Advertising*, he discusses the decline of typography, dating its demise in the late 1860's and early 1870's. He refers to the period before then as the "dark ages" of typographical display.¹⁹ The dark ages to which he refers began in 1704 when the first paid advertisements appeared in an American newspaper, *The Boston News-Letter*. These were three in number, occupying altogether four inches of single-column space. One of them offered a reward for the capture of a thief; another offered a reward for the return of an anvil that was "taken up" by some unknown party. The third actually offered something for sale, and, in fact, is not unlike real estate advertisements one might see in today's *New York Times*:

At Oysterbay, on *Long Island* in the Province of N. York. There is a very good Fulling-Mill, to be Let or Sold, as also a Plantation, having on it a large new Brick house, and another good house by it for a Kitchen & workhouse, with a Barn, Stable &c. a young Orchard and 20 acres clear land. The Mill is to be Let with or without the Plantation; Enquire of Mr. William *Bradford* Printer in N. York, and know further.²⁰

For more than a century and a half afterward, advertisements took this form with minor alterations. For example, sixty-four years after Mr. Bradford advertised an estate in Oyster Bay, the legendary Paul Revere placed the following advertisement in the *Boston Gazette*:

Whereas many persons are so unfortunate as to lose their Fore-Teeth by Accident, and otherways, to their great Detriment, not only in Looks, but Speaking both in Public and Private:—This is to inform all such, that they may have them re-placed with false Ones, that look as well as the Natural, and Answers the End of Speaking to all Intents, by PAUL REVERE, Goldsmith, near the Head of Dr. Clarke's Wharf, Boston.²¹

Revere went on to explain in another paragraph that those whose false teeth had been fitted by John Baker, and who had suffered the indignity of having them loosen, might come to Revere to have them tightened. He indicated that he had learned how to do this from John Baker himself.

Not until almost a hundred years after Revere's announcement were there any serious attempts by advertisers to overcome the lineal, typographic form demanded by publishers.²² And not until the end of the nineteenth century did advertising move fully into its modern mode of discourse. As late as 1890, advertising, still understood to consist of words, was regarded as an essentially serious and rational enterprise whose purpose was to convey information and make claims in propositional

form. Advertising was, as Stephen Douglas said in another context, intended to appeal to understanding, not to passions. This is not to say that during the period of typographic display, the claims that were put forward were true. Words cannot guarantee their truth content. Rather, they assemble a context in which the question, *Is this true or false?* is relevant. In the 1890's that context was shattered, first by the massive intrusion of illustrations and photographs, then by the nonpropositional use of language. For example, in the 1890's advertisers adopted the technique of using slogans. Presbrey contends that modern advertising can be said to begin with the use of two such slogans: "You press the button; we do the rest" and "See that hump?" At about the same time, jingles started to be used, and in 1892, Procter and Gamble invited the public to submit rhymes to advertise Ivory Soap. In 1896, H-O employed, for the first time, a picture of a baby in a high chair, the bowl of cereal before him, his spoon in hand, his face ecstatic. By the turn of the century, advertisers no longer assumed rationality on the part of their potential customers. Advertising became one part depth psychology, one part aesthetic theory. Reason had to move itself to other arenas.

To understand the role that the printed word played in providing an earlier America with its assumptions about intelligence, truth and the nature of discourse, one must keep in view that the act of reading in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries had an entirely different quality to it than the act of reading does today. For one thing, as I have said, the printed word had a monopoly on both attention and intellect, there being no other means, besides the oral tradition, to have access to public knowledge. Public figures were known largely by their written words, for example, not by their looks or even their oratory. It is quite likely that most of the first fifteen presidents of the United States would not have been recognized had they passed the average citizen in the street. This would have been the case as well of the great lawyers, ministers and scientists of that era. To

think about those men was to think about what they had written, to judge them by their public positions, their arguments, their knowledge as codified in the printed word. You may get some sense of how we are separated from this kind of consciousness by thinking about any of our recent presidents; or even preachers, lawyers and scientists who are or who have recently been public figures. Think of Richard Nixon or Jimmy Carter or Billy Graham, or even Albert Einstein, and what will come to your mind is an image, a picture of a face, most likely a face on a television screen (in Einstein's case, a photograph of a face). Of words, almost nothing will come to mind. This is the difference between thinking in a word-centered culture and thinking in an image-centered culture.

It is also the difference between living in a culture that provides little opportunity for leisure, and one that provides much. The farm boy following the plow with book in hand, the mother reading aloud to her family on a Sunday afternoon, the merchant reading announcements of the latest clipper arrivals—these were different kinds of readers from those of today. There would have been little casual reading, for there was not a great deal of time for that. Reading would have had a sacred element in it, or if not that, would have at least occurred as a daily or weekly ritual invested with special meaning. For we must also remember that this was a culture without electricity. It would not have been easy to read by either candlelight or, later, gaslight. Doubtless, much reading was done between dawn and the start of the day's business. What reading would have been done was done seriously, intensely, and with steadfast purpose. The modern idea of testing a reader's "comprehension," as distinct from something else a reader may be doing, would have seemed an absurdity in 1790 or 1830 or 1860. What else was reading but comprehending? As far as we know, there did not exist such a thing as a "reading problem," except, of course, for those who could not attend school. To attend school meant to learn to read, for without that capacity,

one could not participate in the culture's conversations. But most people could read and did participate. To these people, reading was both their connection to and their model of the world. The printed page revealed the world, line by line, page by page, to be a serious, coherent place, capable of management by reason, and of improvement by logical and relevant criticism.

Almost anywhere one looks in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, then, one finds the resonances of the printed word and, in particular, its inextricable relationship to all forms of public expression. It may be true, as Charles Beard wrote, that the primary motivation of the writers of the United States Constitution was the protection of their economic interests. But it is also true that they assumed that participation in public life required the capacity to negotiate the printed word. To them, mature citizenship was not conceivable without sophisticated literacy, which is why the voting age in most states was set at twenty-one, and why Jefferson saw in universal education America's best hope. And that is also why, as Allan Nevins and Henry Steele Commager have pointed out, the voting restrictions against those who owned no property were frequently overlooked, but not one's inability to read.

It may be true, as Frederick Jackson Turner wrote, that the spirit that fired the American mind was the fact of an ever-expanding frontier. But it is also true, as Paul Anderson has written, that "it is no mere figure of speech to say that farm boys followed the plow with book in hand, be it Shakespeare, Emerson, or Thoreau."²³ For it was not only a frontier mentality that led Kansas to be the first state to permit women to vote in school elections, or Wyoming the first state to grant complete equality in the franchise. Women were probably more adept readers than men, and even in the frontier states the principal means of public discourse issued from the printed word. Those who could read had, inevitably, to become part of the conversation.

It may also be true, as Perry Miller has suggested, that the religious fervor of Americans provided much of their energy; or, as earlier historians told it, that America was created by an idea whose time had come. I quarrel with none of these explanations. I merely observe that the America they try to explain was dominated by a public discourse which took its form from the products of the printing press. For two centuries, America declared its intentions, expressed its ideology, designed its laws, sold its products, created its literature and addressed its deities with black squiggles on white paper. It did its talking in typography, and with that as the main feature of its symbolic environment rose to prominence in world civilization.

The name I give to that period of time during which the American mind submitted itself to the sovereignty of the printing press is the Age of Exposition. Exposition is a mode of thought, a method of learning, and a means of expression. Almost all of the characteristics we associate with mature discourse were amplified by typography, which has the strongest possible bias toward exposition: a sophisticated ability to think conceptually, deductively and sequentially; a high valuation of reason and order; an abhorrence of contradiction; a large capacity for detachment and objectivity; and a tolerance for delayed response. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, for reasons I am most anxious to explain, the Age of Exposition began to pass, and the early signs of its replacement could be discerned. Its replacement was to be the Age of Show Business.

5.

The Peek-a-Boo World

Toward the middle years of the nineteenth century, two ideas came together whose convergence provided twentieth-century America with a new metaphor of public discourse. Their partnership overwhelmed the Age of Exposition, and laid the foundation for the Age of Show Business. One of the ideas was quite new, the other as old as the cave paintings of Altamira. We shall come to the old idea presently. The new idea was that transportation and communication could be disengaged from each other, that space was not an inevitable constraint on the movement of information.

Americans of the 1800's were very much concerned with the problem of "conquering" space. By the mid-nineteenth century, the frontier extended to the Pacific Ocean, and a rudimentary railroad system, begun in the 1830's, had started to move people and merchandise across the continent. But until the 1840's, information could move only as fast as a human being could carry it; to be precise, only as fast as a train could travel, which, to be even more precise, meant about thirty-five miles per hour. In the face of such a limitation, the development of America as a national community was retarded. In the 1840's, America was still a composite of regions, each conversing in its own ways, addressing its own interests. A continentwide conversation was not yet possible.

The solution to these problems, as every school child used to know, was electricity. To no one's surprise, it was an American who found a practical way to put electricity in the service of

communication and, in doing so, eliminated the problem of space once and for all. I refer, of course, to Samuel Finley Breese Morse, America's first true "spaceman." His telegraph erased state lines, collapsed regions, and, by wrapping the continent in an information grid, created the possibility of a unified American discourse.

But at a considerable cost. For telegraphy did something that Morse did not foresee when he prophesied that telegraphy would make "one neighborhood of the whole country." It destroyed the prevailing definition of information, and in doing so gave a new meaning to public discourse. Among the few who understood this consequence was Henry David Thoreau, who remarked in *Walden* that "We are in great haste to construct a magnetic telegraph from Maine to Texas; but Maine and Texas, it may be, have nothing important to communicate. . . . We are eager to tunnel under the Atlantic and bring the old world some weeks nearer to the new; but perchance the first news that will leak through into the broad flapping American ear will be that Princess Adelaide has the whooping cough."¹

Thoreau, as it turned out, was precisely correct. He grasped that the telegraph would create its own definition of discourse; that it would not only permit but insist upon a conversation between Maine and Texas; and that it would require the content of that conversation to be different from what Typographic Man was accustomed to.

The telegraph made a three-pronged attack on typography's definition of discourse, introducing on a large scale irrelevance, impotence, and incoherence. These demons of discourse were aroused by the fact that telegraphy gave a form of legitimacy to the idea of context-free information; that is, to the idea that the value of information need not be tied to any function it might serve in social and political decision-making and action, but may attach merely to its novelty, interest, and curiosity. The telegraph made information into a commodity, a "thing" that could be bought and sold irrespective of its uses or meaning.

But it did not do so alone. The potential of the telegraph to transform information into a commodity might never have been realized, except for the partnership between the telegraph and the press. The penny newspaper, emerging slightly before telegraphy, in the 1830's, had already begun the process of elevating irrelevance to the status of news. Such papers as Benjamin Day's *New York Sun* and James Bennett's *New York Herald* turned away from the tradition of news as reasoned (if biased) political opinion and urgent commercial information and filled their pages with accounts of sensational events, mostly concerning crime and sex. While such "human interest news" played little role in shaping the decisions and actions of readers, it was at least local—about places and people within their experience—and it was not always tied to the moment. The human-interest stories of the penny newspapers had a timeless quality; their power to engage lay not so much in their currency as in their transcendence. Nor did all newspapers occupy themselves with such content. For the most part, the information they provided was not only local but largely functional—tied to the problems and decisions readers had to address in order to manage their personal and community affairs.

The telegraph changed all that, and with astonishing speed. Within months of Morse's first public demonstration, the local and the timeless had lost their central position in newspapers, eclipsed by the dazzle of distance and speed. In fact, the first known use of the telegraph by a newspaper occurred *one day* after Morse gave his historic demonstration of telegraphy's workability. Using the same Washington-to-Baltimore line Morse had constructed, the *Baltimore Patriot* gave its readers information about action taken by the House of Representatives on the Oregon issue. The paper concluded its report by noting: "... we are thus enabled to give our readers information from Washington up to two o'clock. This is indeed the annihilation of space."²

For a brief time, practical problems (mostly involving the

scarcity of telegraph lines) preserved something of the old definition of news as functional information. But the foresighted among the nation's publishers were quick to see where the future lay, and committed their full resources to the wiring of the continent. William Swain, the owner of the *Philadelphia Public Ledger*, not only invested heavily in the Magnetic Telegraph Company, the first commercial telegraph corporation, but became its president in 1850.

It was not long until the fortunes of newspapers came to depend not on the quality or utility of the news they provided, but on how much, from what distances, and at what speed. James Bennett of the *New York Herald* boasted that in the first week of 1848, his paper contained 79,000 words of telegraphic content³—of what relevance to his readers, he didn't say. Only four years after Morse opened the nation's first telegraph line on May 24, 1844, the Associated Press was founded, and news from nowhere, addressed to no one in particular, began to criss-cross the nation. Wars, crimes, crashes, fires, floods—much of it the social and political equivalent of Adelaide's whooping cough—became the content of what people called "the news of the day."

As Thoreau implied, telegraphy made relevance irrelevant. The abundant flow of information had very little or nothing to do with those to whom it was addressed; that is, with any social or intellectual context in which their lives were embedded. Coleridge's famous line about water everywhere without a drop to drink may serve as a metaphor of a decontextualized information environment: In a sea of information, there was very little of it to use. A man in Maine and a man in Texas could converse, but not about anything either of them knew or cared very much about. The telegraph may have made the country into "one neighborhood," but it was a peculiar one, populated by strangers who knew nothing but the most superficial facts about each other.

Since we live today in just such a neighborhood (now some-

times called a "global village"), you may get a sense of what is meant by context-free information by asking yourself the following question: How often does it occur that information provided you on morning radio or television, or in the morning newspaper, causes you to alter your plans for the day, or to take some action you would not otherwise have taken, or provides insight into some problem you are required to solve? For most of us, news of the weather will sometimes have such consequences; for investors, news of the stock market; perhaps an occasional story about a crime will do it, if by chance the crime occurred near where you live or involved someone you know. But most of our daily news is inert, consisting of information that gives us something to talk about but cannot lead to any meaningful action. This fact is the principal legacy of the telegraph: By generating an abundance of irrelevant information, it dramatically altered what may be called the "information-action ratio."

In both oral and typographic cultures, information derives its importance from the possibilities of action. Of course, in any communication environment, input (what one is informed about) always exceeds output (the possibilities of action based on information). But the situation created by telegraphy, and then exacerbated by later technologies, made the relationship between information and action both abstract and remote. For the first time in human history, people were faced with the problem of information glut, which means that simultaneously they were faced with the problem of a diminished social and political potency.

You may get a sense of what this means by asking yourself another series of questions: What steps do you plan to take to reduce the conflict in the Middle East? Or the rates of inflation, crime and unemployment? What are your plans for preserving the environment or reducing the risk of nuclear war? What do you plan to do about NATO, OPEC, the CIA, affirmative action, and the monstrous treatment of the Baha'is in Iran? I shall take

the liberty of answering for you: You plan to do nothing about them. You may, of course, cast a ballot for someone who claims to have some plans, as well as the power to act. But this you can do only once every two or four years by giving one hour of your time, hardly a satisfying means of expressing the broad range of opinions you hold. Voting, we might even say, is the next to last refuge of the politically impotent. The last refuge is, of course, giving your opinion to a pollster, who will get a version of it through a desiccated question, and then will submerge it in a Niagara of similar opinions, and convert them into—what else?—another piece of news. Thus, we have here a great loop of impotence: The news elicits from you a variety of opinions about which you can do nothing except to offer them as more news, about which you can do nothing.

Prior to the age of telegraphy, the information-action ratio was sufficiently close so that most people had a sense of being able to control some of the contingencies in their lives. What people knew about had action-value. In the information world created by telegraphy, this sense of potency was lost, precisely because the whole world became the context for news. Everything became everyone's business. For the first time, we were sent information which answered no question we had asked, and which, in any case, did not permit the right of reply.

We may say then that the contribution of the telegraph to public discourse was to dignify irrelevance and amplify impotence. But this was not all: Telegraphy also made public discourse essentially incoherent. It brought into being a world of broken time and broken attention, to use Lewis Mumford's phrase. The principal strength of the telegraph was its capacity to move information, not collect it, explain it or analyze it. In this respect, telegraphy was the exact opposite of typography. Books, for example, are an excellent container for the accumulation, quiet scrutiny and organized analysis of information and ideas. It takes time to write a book, and to read one; time to discuss its contents and to make judgments about their merit,

including the form of their presentation. A book is an attempt to make thought permanent and to contribute to the great conversation conducted by authors of the past. Therefore, civilized people everywhere consider the burning of a book a vile form of anti-intellectualism. *But the telegraph demands that we burn its contents.* The value of telegraphy is undermined by applying the tests of permanence, continuity or coherence. The telegraph is suited only to the flashing of messages, each to be quickly replaced by a more up-to-date message. Facts push other facts into and then out of consciousness at speeds that neither permit nor require evaluation.

The telegraph introduced a kind of public conversation whose form had startling characteristics: Its language was the language of headlines—sensational, fragmented, impersonal. News took the form of slogans, to be noted with excitement, to be forgotten with dispatch. Its language was also entirely discontinuous. One message had no connection to that which preceded or followed it. Each “headline” stood alone as its own context. The receiver of the news had to provide a meaning if he could. The sender was under no obligation to do so. And because of all this, the world as depicted by the telegraph began to appear unmanageable, even undecipherable. The line-by-line, sequential, continuous form of the printed page slowly began to lose its resonance as a metaphor of how knowledge was to be acquired and how the world was to be understood. “Knowing” the facts took on a new meaning, for it did not imply that one understood implications, background, or connections. Telegraphic discourse permitted no time for historical perspectives and gave no priority to the qualitative. To the telegraph, intelligence meant knowing *of* lots of things, not knowing *about* them.

Thus, to the reverent question posed by Morse—What hath God wrought?—a disturbing answer came back: a neighborhood of strangers and pointless quantity; a world of fragments and discontinuities. God, of course, had nothing to do with it.

And yet, for all of the power of the telegraph, had it stood alone as a new metaphor for discourse, it is likely that print culture would have withstood its assault; would, at least, have held its ground. As it happened, at almost exactly the same time Morse was reconceiving the meaning of information, Louis Daguerre was reconceiving the meaning of nature; one might even say, of reality itself. As Daguerre remarked in 1838 in a notice designed to attract investors, "The daguerreotype is not merely an instrument which serves to draw nature . . . [it] gives her the power to reproduce herself."⁴

Of course both the need and the power to draw nature have always implied reproducing nature, refashioning it to make it comprehensible and manageable. The earliest cave paintings were quite possibly visual projections of a hunt that had not yet taken place, wish fulfillments of an anticipated subjection of nature. Reproducing nature, in other words, is a very old idea. But Daguerre did not have this meaning of "reproduce" in mind. He meant to announce that the photograph would invest everyone with the power to duplicate nature as often and wherever one liked. He meant to say he had invented the world's first "cloning" device, that the photograph was to visual experience what the printing press was to the written word.

In point of fact, the daguerreotype was not quite capable of achieving such an equation. It was not until William Henry Fox Talbot, an English mathematician and linguist, invented the process of preparing a negative from which any number of positives could be made that the mass printing and publication of photographs became possible.⁵ The name "photography" was given to this process by the famous astronomer Sir John F. W. Herschel. It is an odd name since it literally means "writing with light." Perhaps Herschel meant the name to be taken ironically, since it must have been clear from the beginning that photography and writing (in fact, language in any form) do not inhabit the same universe of discourse.

Nonetheless, ever since the process was named it has been

the custom to speak of photography as a "language." The metaphor is risky because it tends to obscure the fundamental differences between the two modes of conversation. To begin with, photography is a language that speaks only in particularities. Its vocabulary of images is limited to concrete representation. Unlike words and sentences, the photograph does not present to us an idea or concept about the world, except as we use language itself to convert the image to idea. By itself, a photograph cannot deal with the unseen, the remote, the internal, the abstract. It does not speak of "man," only of *a* man; not of "tree," only of *a* tree. You cannot produce a photograph of "nature," any more than a photograph of "the sea." You can only photograph a particular fragment of the here-and-now—a cliff of a certain terrain, in a certain condition of light; a wave at a moment in time, from a particular point of view. And just as "nature" and "the sea" cannot be photographed, such larger abstractions as truth, honor, love, falsehood cannot be talked about in the lexicon of pictures. For "showing of" and "talking about" are two very different kinds of processes. "Pictures," Gavriel Salomon has written, "need to be recognized, words need to be understood."⁶ By this he means that the photograph presents the world as object; language, the world as idea. For even the simplest act of naming a thing is an act of thinking—of comparing one thing with others, selecting certain features in common, ignoring what is different, and making an imaginary category. There is no such thing in nature as "man" or "tree." The universe offers no such categories or simplifications; only flux and infinite variety. The photograph documents and celebrates the particularities of this infinite variety. Language makes them comprehensible.

The photograph also lacks a syntax, which deprives it of a capacity to argue with the world. As an "objective" slice of space-time, the photograph testifies that someone was there or something happened. Its testimony is powerful but it offers no opinions—no "should-have-beens" or "might-have-beens."

Photography is preeminently a world of fact, not of dispute about facts or of conclusions to be drawn from them. But this is not to say photography lacks an epistemological bias. As Susan Sontag has observed, a photograph implies "that we know about the world if we accept it as the camera records it."⁷ But, as she further observes, all understanding begins with our *not* accepting the world as it appears. Language, of course, is the medium we use to challenge, dispute, and cross-examine what comes into view, what is on the surface. The words "true" and "false" come from the universe of language, and no other. When applied to a photograph, the question, Is it true? means only, Is this a reproduction of a real slice of space-time? If the answer is "Yes," there are no grounds for argument, for it makes no sense to disagree with an unfaked photograph. The photograph itself makes no arguable propositions, makes no extended and unambiguous commentary. It offers no assertions to refute, so it is not refutable.

The way in which the photograph records experience is also different from the way of language. Language makes sense only when it is presented as a sequence of propositions. Meaning is distorted when a word or sentence is, as we say, taken out of context; when a reader or listener is deprived of what was said before, and after. But there is no such thing as a photograph taken out of context, for a photograph does not require one. In fact, the point of photography is to isolate images from context, so as to make them visible in a different way. In a world of photographic images, Ms. Sontag writes, "all borders . . . seem arbitrary. Anything can be separated, can be made discontinuous, from anything else: All that is necessary is to frame the subject differently."⁸ She is remarking on the capacity of photographs to perform a peculiar kind of dismembering of reality, a wrenching of moments out of their contexts, and a juxtaposing of events and things that have no logical or historical connection with each other. Like telegraphy, photography recreates the world as a series of idiosyncratic events. There is no

beginning, middle, or end in a world of photographs, as there is none implied by telegraphy. The world is atomized. There is only a present and it need not be part of any story that can be told.

That the image and the word have different functions, work at different levels of abstraction, and require different modes of response will not come as a new idea to anyone. Painting is at least three times as old as writing, and the place of imagery in the repertoire of communication instruments was quite well understood in the nineteenth century. What was new in the mid-nineteenth century was the sudden and massive intrusion of the photograph and other iconographs into the symbolic environment. This event is what Daniel Boorstin in his pioneering book *The Image* calls "the graphic revolution." By this phrase, Boorstin means to call attention to the fierce assault on language made by forms of mechanically reproduced imagery that spread unchecked throughout American culture—photographs, prints, posters, drawings, advertisements. I choose the word "assault" deliberately here, to amplify the point implied in Boorstin's "graphic revolution." The new imagery, with photography at its forefront, did not merely function as a supplement to language, but bid to replace it as our dominant means for construing, understanding, and testing reality. What Boorstin implies about the graphic revolution, I wish to make explicit here: The new focus on the image undermined traditional definitions of information, of news, and, to a large extent, of reality itself. First in billboards, posters, and advertisements, and later in such "news" magazines and papers as *Life*, *Look*, the New York *Daily Mirror* and *Daily News*, the picture forced exposition into the background, and in some instances obliterated it altogether. By the end of the nineteenth century, advertisers and newspapermen had discovered that a picture was not only worth a thousand words, but, where sales were concerned, was better. For countless Americans, seeing, not reading, became the basis for believing.

In a peculiar way, the photograph was the perfect complement to the flood of telegraphic news-from-nowhere that threatened to submerge readers in a sea of facts from unknown places about strangers with unknown faces. For the photograph gave a concrete reality to the strange-sounding datelines, and attached faces to the unknown names. Thus it provided the illusion, at least, that "the news" had a connection to something within one's sensory experience. It created an apparent context for the "news of the day." And the "news of the day" created a context for the photograph.

But the sense of context created by the partnership of photograph and headline was, of course, entirely illusory. You may get a better sense of what I mean here if you imagine a stranger's informing you that the *illyx* is a subspecies of vermiform plant with articulated leaves that flowers biannually on the island of Aldononjes. And if you wonder aloud, "Yes, but what has that to do with anything?" imagine that your informant replies, "But here is a photograph I want you to see," and hands you a picture labeled *Illyx on Aldononjes*. "Ah, yes," you might murmur, "now I see." It is true enough that the photograph provides a context for the sentence you have been given, and that the sentence provides a context of sorts for the photograph, and you may even believe for a day or so that you have learned something. But if the event is entirely self-contained, devoid of any relationship to your past knowledge or future plans, if that is the beginning and end of your encounter with the stranger, then the appearance of context provided by the conjunction of sentence and image is illusory, and so is the impression of meaning attached to it. You will, in fact, have "learned" nothing (except perhaps to avoid strangers with photographs), and the *illyx* will fade from your mental landscape as though it had never been. At best you are left with an amusing bit of trivia, good for trading in cocktail party chatter or solving a crossword puzzle, but nothing more.

It may be of some interest to note, in this connection, that the

crossword puzzle became a popular form of diversion in America at just that point when the telegraph and the photograph had achieved the transformation of news from functional information to decontextualized fact. This coincidence suggests that the new technologies had turned the age-old problem of information on its head: Where people once sought information to manage the real contexts of their lives, now they had to invent contexts in which otherwise useless information might be put to some apparent use. The crossword puzzle is one such pseudo-context; the cocktail party is another; the radio quiz shows of the 1930's and 1940's and the modern television game show are still others; and the ultimate, perhaps, is the wildly successful "Trivial Pursuit." In one form or another, each of these supplies an answer to the question, "What am I to do with all these disconnected facts?" And in one form or another, the answer is the same: Why not use them for diversion? for entertainment? to amuse yourself, in a game? In *The Image*, Boorstin calls the major creation of the graphic revolution the "pseudo-event," by which he means an event specifically staged to be reported—like the press conference, say. I mean to suggest here that a more significant legacy of the telegraph and the photograph may be the pseudo-context. A pseudo-context is a structure invented to give fragmented and irrelevant information a seeming use. But the use the pseudo-context provides is not action, or problem-solving, or change. It is the only use left for information with no genuine connection to our lives. And that, of course, is to amuse. The pseudo-context is the last refuge, so to say, of a culture overwhelmed by irrelevance, incoherence, and impotence.

Of course, photography and telegraphy did not strike down at one blow the vast edifice that was typographic culture. The habits of exposition, as I have tried to show, had a long history, and they held powerful sway over the minds of turn-of-the-century Americans. In fact, the early decades of the twentieth century were marked by a great outpouring of brilliant language and

literature. In the pages of magazines like the *American Mercury* and *The New Yorker*, in the novels and stories of Faulkner, Fitzgerald, Steinbeck, and Hemingway, and even in the columns of the newspaper giants—the *Herald Tribune*, the *Times*—prose thrilled with a vibrancy and intensity that delighted ear and eye. But this was exposition's nightingale song, most brilliant and sweet as the singer nears the moment of death. It told, for the Age of Exposition, not of new beginnings, but of an end. Beneath its dying melody, a new note had been sounded, and photography and telegraphy set the key. Theirs was a "language" that denied interconnectedness, proceeded without context, argued the irrelevance of history, explained nothing, and offered fascination in place of complexity and coherence. Theirs was a duet of image and instancy, and together they played the tune of a new kind of public discourse in America.

Each of the media that entered the electronic conversation in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries followed the lead of the telegraph and the photograph, and amplified their biases. Some, such as film, were by their nature inclined to do so. Others, whose bias was rather toward the amplification of rational speech—like radio—were overwhelmed by the thrust of the new epistemology and came in the end to support it. Together, this ensemble of electronic techniques called into being a new world—a peek-a-boo world, where now this event, now that, pops into view for a moment, then vanishes again. It is a world without much coherence or sense; a world that does not ask us, indeed, does not permit us to do anything; a world that is, like the child's game of peek-a-boo, entirely self-contained. But like peek-a-boo, it is also endlessly entertaining.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with playing peek-a-boo. And there is nothing wrong with entertainment. As some psychiatrist once put it, we all build castles in the air. The problems come when we try to *live* in them. The communications media of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, with tele-

graphy and photography at their center, called the peek-a-boo world into existence, but we did not come to live there until television. Television gave the epistemological biases of the telegraph and the photograph their most potent expression, raising the interplay of image and instance to an exquisite and dangerous perfection. And it brought them into the home. We are by now well into a second generation of children for whom television has been their first and most accessible teacher and, for many, their most reliable companion and friend. To put it plainly, television is the command center of the new epistemology. There is no audience so young that it is barred from television. There is no poverty so abject that it must forgo television. There is no education so exalted that it is not modified by television. And most important of all, there is no subject of public interest—politics, news, education, religion, science, sports—that does not find its way to television. Which means that all public understanding of these subjects is shaped by the biases of television.

Television is the command center in subtler ways as well. Our use of other media, for example, is largely orchestrated by television. Through it we learn what telephone system to use, what movies to see, what books, records and magazines to buy, what radio programs to listen to. Television arranges our communications environment for us in ways that no other medium has the power to do.

As a small, ironic example of this point, consider this: In the past few years, we have been learning that the computer is the technology of the future. We are told that our children will fail in school and be left behind in life if they are not "computer literate." We are told that we cannot run our businesses, or compile our shopping lists, or keep our checkbooks tidy unless we own a computer. Perhaps some of this is true. But the most important fact about computers and what they mean to our lives is that we learn about all of this from television. Television has achieved the status of "meta-medium"—an instrument

that directs not only our knowledge of the world, but our knowledge of *ways of knowing* as well.

At the same time, television has achieved the status of "myth," as Roland Barthes uses the word. He means by myth a way of understanding the world that is not problematic, that we are not fully conscious of, that seems, in a word, natural. A myth is a way of thinking so deeply embedded in our consciousness that it is invisible. This is now the way of television. We are no longer fascinated or perplexed by its machinery. We do not tell stories of its wonders. We do not confine our television sets to special rooms. We do not doubt the reality of what we see on television, are largely unaware of the special angle of vision it affords. Even the question of how television affects us has receded into the background. The question itself may strike some of us as strange, as if one were to ask how having ears and eyes affects us. Twenty years ago, the question, Does television shape culture or merely reflect it? held considerable interest for many scholars and social critics. The question has largely disappeared as television has gradually *become* our culture. This means, among other things, that we rarely talk about television, only about what is *on* television—that is, about its content. Its ecology, which includes not only its physical characteristics and symbolic code but the conditions in which we normally attend to it, is taken for granted, accepted as natural.

Television has become, so to speak, the background radiation of the social and intellectual universe, the all-but-imperceptible residue of the electronic big bang of a century past, so familiar and so thoroughly integrated with American culture that we no longer hear its faint hissing in the background or see the flickering gray light. This, in turn, means that its epistemology goes largely unnoticed. And the peek-a-boo world it has constructed around us no longer seems even strange.

There is no more disturbing consequence of the electronic and graphic revolution than this: that the world as given to us through television seems natural, not bizarre. For the loss of the

sense of the strange is a sign of adjustment, and the extent to which we have adjusted is a measure of the extent to which we have been changed. Our culture's adjustment to the epistemology of television is by now all but complete; we have so thoroughly accepted its definitions of truth, knowledge, and reality that irrelevance seems to us to be filled with import, and incoherence seems eminently sane. And if some of our institutions seem not to fit the template of the times, why it is they, and not the template, that seem to us disordered and strange.

It is my object in the rest of this book to make the epistemology of television visible again. I will try to demonstrate by concrete example that television's way of knowing is uncompromisingly hostile to typography's way of knowing; that television's conversations promote incoherence and triviality; that the phrase "serious television" is a contradiction in terms; and that television speaks in only one persistent voice—the voice of entertainment. Beyond that, I will try to demonstrate that to enter the great television conversation, one American cultural institution after another is learning to speak its terms. Television, in other words, is transforming our culture into one vast arena for show business. It is entirely possible, of course, that in the end we shall find that delightful, and decide we like it just fine. That is exactly what Aldous Huxley feared was coming, fifty years ago.

Part II.

6.

The Age of Show Business

A dedicated graduate student I know returned to his small apartment the night before a major examination only to discover that his solitary lamp was broken beyond repair. After a whiff of panic, he was able to restore both his equanimity and his chances for a satisfactory grade by turning on the television set, turning off the sound, and with his back to the set, using its light to read important passages on which he was to be tested. This is one use of television—as a source of illuminating the printed page.

But the television screen is more than a light source. It is also a smooth, nearly flat surface on which the printed word may be displayed. We have all stayed at hotels in which the TV set has had a special channel for describing the day's events in letters rolled endlessly across the screen. This is another use of television—as an electronic bulletin board.

Many television sets are also large and sturdy enough to bear the weight of a small library. The top of an old-fashioned RCA console can handle as many as thirty books, and I know one woman who has securely placed her entire collection of Dickens, Flaubert, and Turgenev on the top of a 21-inch Westinghouse. Here is still another use of television—as bookcase.

I bring forward these quixotic uses of television to ridicule the hope harbored by some that television can be used to support the literate tradition. Such a hope represents exactly what Marshall McLuhan used to call "rear-view mirror" thinking: the assumption that a new medium is merely an extension or

amplification of an older one; that an automobile, for example, is only a fast horse, or an electric light a powerful candle. To make such a mistake in the matter at hand is to misconstrue entirely how television redefines the meaning of public discourse. Television does not extend or amplify literate culture. It attacks it. If television is a continuation of anything, it is of a tradition begun by the telegraph and photograph in the mid-nineteenth century, not by the printing press in the fifteenth.

What is television? What kinds of conversations does it permit? What are the intellectual tendencies it encourages? What sort of culture does it produce?

These are the questions to be addressed in the rest of this book, and to approach them with a minimum of confusion, I must begin by making a distinction between a technology and a medium. We might say that a technology is to a medium as the brain is to the mind. Like the brain, a technology is a physical apparatus. Like the mind, a medium is a use to which a physical apparatus is put. A technology becomes a medium as it employs a particular symbolic code, as it finds its place in a particular social setting, as it insinuates itself into economic and political contexts. A technology, in other words, is merely a machine. A medium is the social and intellectual environment a machine creates.

Of course, like the brain itself, every technology has an inherent bias. It has within its physical form a predisposition toward being used in certain ways and not others. Only those who know nothing of the history of technology believe that a technology is entirely neutral. There is an old joke that mocks that naive belief. Thomas Edison, it goes, would have revealed his discovery of the electric light much sooner than he did except for the fact that every time he turned it on, he held it to his mouth and said, "Hello? Hello?"

Not very likely. Each technology has an agenda of its own. It is, as I have suggested, a metaphor waiting to unfold. The printing press, for example, had a clear bias toward being used as a

linguistic medium. It is *conceivable* to use it exclusively for the reproduction of pictures. And, one imagines, the Roman Catholic Church would not have objected to its being so used in the sixteenth century. Had that been the case, the Protestant Reformation might not have occurred, for as Luther contended, with the word of God on every family's kitchen table, Christians do not require the Papacy to interpret it for them. But in fact there never was much chance that the press would be used solely, or even very much, for the duplication of icons. From its beginning in the fifteenth century, the press was perceived as an extraordinary opportunity for the display and mass distribution of written language. Everything about its technical possibilities led in that direction. One might even say it was invented for that purpose.

The technology of television has a bias, as well. It is conceivable to use television as a lamp, a surface for texts, a bookcase, even as radio. But it has not been so used and will not be so used, at least in America. Thus, in answering the question, What is television?, we must understand as a first point that we are not talking about television as a technology but television as a medium. There are many places in the world where television, though the same technology as it is in America, is an entirely different medium from that which we know. I refer to places where the majority of people do not have television sets, and those who do have only one; where only one station is available; where television does not operate around the clock; where most programs have as their purpose the direct furtherance of government ideology and policy; where commercials are unknown, and "talking heads" are the principal image; where television is mostly used as if it were radio. For these reasons and more television will not have the same meaning or power as it does in America, which is to say, it is possible for a technology to be so used that its potentialities are prevented from developing and its social consequences kept to a minimum.

But in America, this has not been the case. Television has found in liberal democracy and a relatively free market economy a nurturing climate in which its full potentialities as a technology of images could be exploited. One result of this has been that American television programs are in demand all over the world. The total estimate of U.S. television program exports is approximately 100,000 to 200,000 hours, equally divided among Latin America, Asia and Europe.¹ Over the years, programs like "Gunsmoke," "Bonanza," "Mission: Impossible," "Star Trek," "Kojak," and more recently, "Dallas" and "Dynasty" have been as popular in England, Japan, Israel and Norway as in Omaha, Nebraska. I have heard (but not verified) that some years ago the Lapps postponed for several days their annual and, one supposes, essential migratory journey so that they could find out who shot J.R. All of this has occurred simultaneously with the decline of America's moral and political prestige, worldwide. American television programs are in demand not because America is loved but because American television is loved.

We need not be detained too long in figuring out why. In watching American television, one is reminded of George Bernard Shaw's remark on his first seeing the glittering neon signs of Broadway and 42nd Street at night. It must be beautiful, he said, if you cannot read. American television is, indeed, a beautiful spectacle, a visual delight, pouring forth thousands of images on any given day. The average length of a shot on network television is only 3.5 seconds, so that the eye never rests, always has something new to see. Moreover, television offers viewers a variety of subject matter, requires minimal skills to comprehend it, and is largely aimed at emotional gratification. Even commercials, which some regard as an annoyance, are exquisitely crafted, always pleasing to the eye and accompanied by exciting music. There is no question but that the best photography in the world is presently seen on television commercials. American

television, in other words, is devoted entirely to supplying its audience with entertainment.

Of course, to say that television is entertaining is merely banal. Such a fact is hardly threatening to a culture, not even worth writing a book about. It may even be a reason for rejoicing. Life, as we like to say, is not a highway strewn with flowers. The sight of a few blossoms here and there may make our journey a trifle more endurable. The Lapps undoubtedly thought so. We may surmise that the ninety million Americans who watch television every night also think so. But what I am claiming here is not that television is entertaining but that it has made entertainment itself the natural format for the representation of all experience. Our television set keeps us in constant communion with the world, but it does so with a face whose smiling countenance is unalterable. The problem is not that television presents us with entertaining subject matter but that all subject matter is presented as entertaining, which is another issue altogether.

To say it still another way: Entertainment is the supradiscourse of all discourse on television. No matter what is depicted or from what point of view, the overarching presumption is that it is there for our amusement and pleasure. That is why even on news shows which provide us daily with fragments of tragedy and barbarism, we are urged by the newscasters to "join them tomorrow." What for? One would think that several minutes of murder and mayhem would suffice as material for a month of sleepless nights. We accept the newscasters' invitation because we know that the "news" is not to be taken seriously, that it is all in fun, so to say. Everything about a news show tells us this—the good looks and amiability of the cast, their pleasant banter, the exciting music that opens and closes the show, the vivid film footage, the attractive commercials—all these and more suggest that what we have just seen is no cause for weeping. A news show, to put it plainly, is a format for entertain-

ment, not for education, reflection or catharsis. And we must not judge too harshly those who have framed it in this way. They are not assembling the news to be read, or broadcasting it to be heard. They are televising the news to be seen. They must follow where their medium leads. There is no conspiracy here, no lack of intelligence, only a straightforward recognition that "good television" has little to do with what is "good" about exposition or other forms of verbal communication but everything to do with what the pictorial images look like.

I should like to illustrate this point by offering the case of the eighty-minute discussion provided by the ABC network on November 20, 1983, following its controversial movie *The Day After*. Though the memory of this telecast has receded for most, I choose this case because, clearly, here was television taking its most "serious" and "responsible" stance. Everything that made up this broadcast recommended it as a critical test of television's capacity to depart from an entertainment mode and rise to the level of public instruction. In the first place, the subject was the possibility of a nuclear holocaust. Second, the film itself had been attacked by several influential bodies politic, including the Reverend Jerry Falwell's Moral Majority. Thus, it was important that the network display television's value and serious intentions as a medium of information and coherent discourse. Third, on the program itself no musical theme was used as background—a significant point since almost all television programs are embedded in music, which helps to tell the audience what emotions are to be called forth. This is a standard theatrical device, and its absence on television is always ominous. Fourth, there were no commercials during the discussion, thus elevating the tone of the event to the state of reverence usually reserved for the funerals of assassinated Presidents. And finally, the participants included Henry Kissinger, Robert McNamara, and Elie Wiesel, each of whom is a symbol of sorts of serious discourse. Although Kissinger, somewhat later, made an appearance on the hit show "Dynasty," he was then and still is a

paradigm of intellectual sobriety; and Wiesel, practically a walking metaphor of social conscience. Indeed, the other members of the cast—Carl Sagan, William Buckley and General Brent Scowcroft—are, each in his way, men of intellectual bearing who are not expected to participate in trivial public matters.

The program began with Ted Koppel, master of ceremonies, so to speak, indicating that what followed was not intended to be a debate but a *discussion*. And so those who are interested in philosophies of discourse had an excellent opportunity to observe what serious television means by the word "discussion." Here is what it means: Each of six men was given approximately five minutes to say something about the subject. There was, however, no agreement on exactly what the subject was, and no one felt obliged to respond to anything anyone else said. In fact, it would have been difficult to do so, since the participants were called upon seriatim, as if they were finalists in a beauty contest, each being given his share of minutes in front of the camera. Thus, if Mr. Wiesel, who was called upon last, had a response to Mr. Buckley, who was called upon first, there would have been four commentaries in between, occupying about twenty minutes, so that the audience (if not Mr. Wiesel himself) would have had difficulty remembering the argument which prompted his response. In fact, the participants—most of whom were no strangers to television—largely avoided addressing each other's points. They used their initial minutes and then their subsequent ones to intimate their position or give an impression. Dr. Kissinger, for example, seemed intent on making viewers feel sorry that he was no longer their Secretary of State by reminding everyone of books he had once written, proposals he had once made, and negotiations he had once conducted. Mr. McNamara informed the audience that he had eaten lunch in Germany that very afternoon, and went on to say that he had at least fifteen proposals to reduce nuclear arms. One would have thought that the discussion would turn on this

issue, but the others seemed about as interested in it as they were in what he had for lunch in Germany. (Later, he took the initiative to mention three of his proposals but they were not discussed.) Elie Wiesel, in a series of quasi-parables and paradoxes, stressed the tragic nature of the human condition, but because he did not have the time to provide a context for his remarks, he seemed quixotic and confused, conveying an impression of an itinerant rabbi who has wandered into a coven of Gentiles.

In other words, this was no discussion as we normally use the word. Even when the "discussion" period began, there were no arguments or counterarguments, no scrutiny of assumptions, no explanations, no elaborations, no definitions. Carl Sagan made, in my opinion, the most coherent statement—a four-minute rationale for a nuclear freeze—but it contained at least two questionable assumptions and was not carefully examined. Apparently, no one wanted to take time from his own few minutes to call attention to someone else's. Mr. Koppel, for his part, felt obliged to keep the "show" moving, and though he occasionally pursued what he discerned as a line of thought, he was more concerned to give each man his fair allotment of time.

But it is not time constraints alone that produce such fragmented and discontinuous language. When a television show is in process, it is very nearly impermissible to say, "Let me think about that" or "I don't know" or "What do you mean when you say . . . ?" or "From what sources does your information come?" This type of discourse not only slows down the tempo of the show but creates the impression of uncertainty or lack of finish. It tends to reveal people in the *act of thinking*, which is as disconcerting and boring on television as it is on a Las Vegas stage. Thinking does not play well on television, a fact that television directors discovered long ago. There is not much to *see* in it. It is, in a phrase, not a performing art. But television demands a performing art, and so what the ABC network gave us was a picture of men of sophisticated verbal skills and political

understanding being brought to heel by a medium that requires them to fashion performances rather than ideas. Which accounts for why the eighty minutes were very entertaining, in the way of a Samuel Beckett play: The intimations of gravity hung heavy, the meaning passeth all understanding. The performances, of course, were highly professional. Sagan abjured the turtle-neck sweater in which he starred when he did "Cosmos." He even had his hair cut for the event. His part was that of the logical scientist speaking in behalf of the planet. It is to be doubted that Paul Newman could have done better in the role, although Leonard Nimoy might have. Scowcroft was suitably military in his bearing—terse and distant, the unbreakable defender of national security. Kissinger, as always, was superb in the part of the knowing world statesman, weary of the sheer responsibility of keeping disaster at bay. Koppel played to perfection the part of a moderator, pretending, as it were, that he was sorting out ideas while, in fact, he was merely directing the performances. At the end, one could only applaud those performances, which is what a good television program always aims to achieve; that is to say, applause, not reflection.

I do not say categorically that it is impossible to use television as a carrier of coherent language or thought in process. William Buckley's own program, "Firing Line," occasionally shows people in the act of thinking but who also happen to have television cameras pointed at them. There are other programs, such as "Meet the Press" or "The Open Mind," which clearly strive to maintain a sense of intellectual decorum and typographic tradition, but they are scheduled so that they do not compete with programs of great visual interest, since otherwise, they will not be watched. After all, it is not unheard of that a format will occasionally go against the bias of its medium. For example, the most popular radio program of the early 1940's featured a ventriloquist, and in those days, I heard more than once the feet of a tap dancer on the "Major Bowes' Amateur Hour." (Indeed, if I am not mistaken, he even once featured a pantomimist.) But

ventriloquism, dancing and mime do not play well on radio, just as sustained, complex talk does not play well on television. It can be made to play tolerably well if only one camera is used and the visual image is kept constant—as when the President gives a speech. But this is not television at its best, and it is not television that most people will choose to watch. The single most important fact about television is that people *watch* it, which is why it is called “television.” And what they watch, and like to watch, are moving pictures—millions of them, of short duration and dynamic variety. It is in the nature of the medium that it must suppress the content of ideas in order to accommodate the requirements of visual interest; that is to say, to accommodate the values of show business.

Film, records and radio (now that it is an adjunct of the music industry) are, of course, equally devoted to entertaining the culture, and their effects in altering the style of American discourse are not insignificant. But television is different because it encompasses all forms of discourse. No one goes to a movie to find out about government policy or the latest scientific advances. No one buys a record to find out the baseball scores or the weather or the latest murder. No one turns on radio anymore for soap operas or a presidential address (if a television set is at hand). But everyone goes to television for all these things and more, which is why television resonates so powerfully throughout the culture. Television is our culture’s principal mode of knowing about itself. Therefore—and this is the critical point—how television stages the world becomes the model for how the world is properly to be staged. It is not merely that on the television screen entertainment is the metaphor for all discourse. It is that off the screen the same metaphor prevails. As typography once dictated the style of conducting politics, religion, business, education, law and other important social matters, television now takes command. In courtrooms, classrooms, operating rooms, board rooms, churches and even airplanes, Americans no longer talk to each other, they entertain each other. They do

not exchange ideas; they exchange images. They do not argue with propositions; they argue with good looks, celebrities and commercials. For the message of television as metaphor is not only that all the world is a stage but that the stage is located in Las Vegas, Nevada.

In Chicago, for example, the Reverend Greg Sakowicz, a Roman Catholic priest, mixes his religious teaching with rock 'n' roll music. According to the Associated Press, the Reverend Sakowicz is both an associate pastor at the Church of the Holy Spirit in Schaumburg (a suburb of Chicago) and a disc jockey at WKQX. On his show, "The Journey Inward," Father Sakowicz chats in soft tones about such topics as family relationships or commitment, and interposes his sermons with "the sound of *Billboard's* Top 10." He says that his preaching is not done "in a churchy way," and adds, "You don't have to be boring in order to be holy."

Meanwhile in New York City at St. Patrick's Cathedral, Father John J. O'Connor put on a New York Yankee baseball cap as he mugged his way through his installation as Archbishop of the New York Archdiocese. He got off some excellent gags, at least one of which was specifically directed at Mayor Edward Koch, who was a member of his audience; that is to say, he was a congregant. At his next public performance, the new archbishop donned a New York Mets baseball cap. These events were, of course, televised, and were vastly entertaining, largely because Archbishop (now Cardinal) O'Connor has gone Father Sakowicz one better: Whereas the latter believes that you don't have to be boring to be holy, the former apparently believes you don't have to be holy at all.

In Phoenix, Arizona, Dr. Edward Dietrich performed triple bypass surgery on Bernard Schuler. The operation was successful, which was nice for Mr. Schuler. It was also on television, which was nice for America. The operation was carried by at least fifty television stations in the United States, and also by the British Broadcasting Corporation. A two-man panel of narrators (a

play-by-play and color man, so to speak) kept viewers informed about what they were seeing. It was not clear as to why this event was televised, but it resulted in transforming both Dr. Dietrich and Mr. Schuler's chest into celebrities. Perhaps because he has seen too many doctor shows on television, Mr. Schuler was uncommonly confident about the outcome of his surgery. "There is no way in hell they are going to lose me on live TV," he said.²

As reported with great enthusiasm by both WCBS-TV and WNBC-TV in 1984, the Philadelphia public schools have embarked on an experiment in which children will have their curriculum sung to them. Wearing Walkman equipment, students were shown listening to rock music whose lyrics were about the eight parts of speech. Mr. Jocko Henderson, who thought of this idea, is planning to delight students further by subjecting mathematics and history, as well as English, to the rigors of a rock music format. In fact, this is not Mr. Henderson's idea at all. It was pioneered by the Children's Television Workshop, whose television show "Sesame Street" is an expensive illustration of the idea that education is indistinguishable from entertainment. Nonetheless, Mr. Henderson has a point in his favor. Whereas "Sesame Street" merely attempts to make learning to read a form of light entertainment, the Philadelphia experiment aims to make the classroom itself into a rock concert.

In New Bedford, Massachusetts, a rape trial was televised, to the delight of audiences who could barely tell the difference between the trial and their favorite mid-day soap opera. In Florida, trials of varying degrees of seriousness, including murder, are regularly televised and are considered to be more entertaining than most fictional courtroom dramas. All of this is done in the interests of "public education." For the same high purpose, plans are afoot, it is rumored, to televise confessionals. To be called "Secrets of the Confessional Box," the program will, of course, carry the warning that some of its material may be offensive to children and therefore parental guidance is suggested.

On a United Airlines flight from Chicago to Vancouver, a stewardess announces that its passengers will play a game. The passenger with the most credit cards will win a bottle of champagne. A man from Boston with twelve credit cards wins. A second game requires the passengers to guess the collective age of the cabin crew. A man from Chicago guesses 128, and wins another bottle of wine. During the second game, the air turns choppy and the Fasten Seat Belt sign goes on. Very few people notice, least of all the cabin crew, who keep up a steady flow of gags on the intercom. When the plane reaches its destination, everyone seems to agree that it's fun to fly from Chicago to Vancouver.

On February 7, 1985, *The New York Times* reported that Professor Charles Pine of Rutgers University (Newark campus) was named Professor of the Year by the Council for the Support and Advancement of Education. In explaining why he has such a great impact on his students, Professor Pine said: "I have some gimmicks I use all the time. If you reach the end of the blackboard, I keep writing on the wall. It always gets a laugh. The way I show what a glass molecule does is to run over to one wall and bounce off it, and run over to the other wall." His students are, perhaps, too young to recall that James Cagney used this "molecule move" to great effect in *Yankee Doodle Dandy*. If I am not mistaken, Donald O'Connor duplicated it in *Singin' in the Rain*. So far as I know, it has been used only once before in a classroom: Hegel tried it several times in demonstrating how the dialectical method works.

The Pennsylvania Amish try to live in isolation from mainstream American culture. Among other things, their religion opposes the veneration of graven images, which means that the Amish are forbidden to see movies or to be photographed. But apparently their religion has not got around to disallowing seeing movies *when* they are being photographed. In the summer of 1984, for example, a Paramount Pictures crew descended upon Lancaster County to film the movie *Witness*, which is

about a detective, played by Harrison Ford, who falls in love with an Amish woman. Although the Amish were warned by their church not to interfere with the film makers, it turned out that some Amish welders ran to see the action as soon as their work was done. Other devout lay in the grass some distance away, and looked down on the set with binoculars. "We read about the movie in the paper," said an Amish woman. "The kids even cut out Harrison Ford's picture." She added: "But it doesn't really matter that much to them. Somebody told us he was in *Star Wars* but that doesn't mean anything to us."³ The last time a similar conclusion was drawn was when the executive director of the American Association of Blacksmiths remarked that he had read about the automobile but that he was convinced it would have no consequences for the future of his organization.

In the Winter, 1984, issue of the *Official Video Journal* there appears a full-page advertisement for "The Genesis Project." The project aims to convert the Bible into a series of movies. The end-product, to be called "The New Media Bible," will consist of 225 hours of film and will cost a quarter of a billion dollars. Producer John Heyman, whose credits include *Saturday Night Fever* and *Grease*, is one of the film makers most committed to the project. "Simply stated," he is quoted as saying, "I got hooked on the Bible." The famous Israeli actor Topol, best known for his role as Tevye in *Fiddler on the Roof*, will play the role of Abraham. The advertisement does not say who will star as God but, given the producer's background, there is some concern that it might be John Travolta.

At the commencement exercises at Yale University in 1983, several honorary degrees were awarded, including one to Mother Teresa. As she and other humanitarians and scholars, each in turn, received their awards, the audience applauded appropriately but with a slight hint of reserve and impatience, for it wished to give its heart to the final recipient who waited shyly in the wings. As the details of her achievements were being

recounted, many people left their seats and surged toward the stage to be closer to the great woman. And when the name Meryl Streep was announced, the audience unleashed a sonic boom of affection to wake the New Haven dead. One man who was present when Bob Hope received his honorary doctorate at another institution said that Dr. Streep's applause surpassed Dr. Hope's. Knowing how to please a crowd as well as anyone, the intellectual leaders at Yale invited Dick Cavett, the talk-show host, to deliver the commencement address the following year. It is rumored that this year, Don Rickles will receive a Doctorate of Humane Letters and Lola Falana will give the commencement address.

Prior to the 1984 presidential elections, the two candidates confronted each other on television in what were called "debates." These events were not in the least like the Lincoln-Douglas debates or anything else that goes by the name. Each candidate was given five minutes to address such questions as, What is (or would be) your policy in Central America? His opposite number was then given one minute for a rebuttal. In such circumstances, complexity, documentation and logic can play no role, and, indeed, on several occasions syntax itself was abandoned entirely. It is no matter. The men were less concerned with giving arguments than with "giving off" impressions, which is what television does best. Post-debate commentary largely avoided any evaluation of the candidates' ideas, since there were none to evaluate. Instead, the debates were conceived as boxing matches, the relevant question being, Who KO'd whom? The answer was determined by the "style" of the men—how they looked, fixed their gaze, smiled, and delivered one-liners. In the second debate, President Reagan got off a swell one-liner when asked a question about his age. The following day, several newspapers indicated that Ron had KO'd Fritz with his joke. Thus, the leader of the free world is chosen by the people in the Age of Television.

What all of this means is that our culture has moved toward a

new way of conducting its business, especially its important business. The nature of its discourse is changing as the demarcation line between what is show business and what is not becomes harder to see with each passing day. Our priests and presidents, our surgeons and lawyers, our educators and newscasters need worry less about satisfying the demands of their discipline than the demands of good showmanship. Had Irving Berlin changed one word in the title of his celebrated song, he would have been as prophetic, albeit more terse, as Aldous Huxley. He need only have written, *There's No Business But Show Business*.

7.

"Now . . . This"

The American humorist H. Allen Smith once suggested that of all the worrisome words in the English language, the scariest is "uh oh," as when a physician looks at your X-rays, and with knitted brow says, "Uh oh." I should like to suggest that the words which are the title of this chapter are as ominous as any, all the more so because they are spoken without knitted brow—indeed, with a kind of idiot's delight. The phrase, if that's what it may be called, adds to our grammar a new part of speech, a conjunction that does not connect anything to anything but does the opposite: separates everything from everything. As such, it serves as a compact metaphor for the discontinuities in so much that passes for public discourse in present-day America.

"Now . . . this" is commonly used on radio and television newscasts to indicate that what one has just heard or seen has no relevance to what one is about to hear or see, or possibly to anything one is ever likely to hear or see. The phrase is a means of acknowledging the fact that the world as mapped by the speeded-up electronic media has no order or meaning and is not to be taken seriously. There is no murder so brutal, no earthquake so devastating, no political blunder so costly—for that matter, no ball score so tantalizing or weather report so threatening—that it cannot be erased from our minds by a newscaster saying, "Now . . . this." The newscaster means that you have thought long enough on the previous matter (approximately forty-five seconds), that you must not be morbidly pre-

occupied with it (let us say, for ninety seconds), and that you must now give your attention to another fragment of news or a commercial.

Television did not invent the "Now . . . this" world view. As I have tried to show, it is the offspring of the intercourse between telegraphy and photography. But it is through television that it has been nurtured and brought to a perverse maturity. For on television, nearly every half hour is a discrete event, separated in content, context, and emotional texture from what precedes and follows it. In part because television sells its time in seconds and minutes, in part because television must use images rather than words, in part because its audience can move freely to and from the television set, programs are structured so that almost each eight-minute segment may stand as a complete event in itself. Viewers are rarely required to carry over any thought or feeling from one parcel of time to another.

Of course, in television's presentation of the "news of the day," we may see the "Now . . . this" mode of discourse in its boldest and most embarrassing form. For there, we are presented not only with fragmented news but news without context, without consequences, without value, and therefore without essential seriousness; that is to say, news as pure entertainment.

Consider, for example, how you would proceed if you were given the opportunity to produce a television news show for any station concerned to attract the largest possible audience. You would, first, choose a cast of players, each of whom has a face that is both "likable" and "credible." Those who apply would, in fact, submit to you their eight-by-ten glossies, from which you would eliminate those whose countenances are not suitable for nightly display. This means that you will exclude women who are not beautiful or who are over the age of fifty, men who are bald, all people who are overweight or whose noses are too long or whose eyes are too close together. You will try, in other words, to assemble a cast of talking hair-do's.

At the very least, you will want those whose faces would not be unwelcome on a magazine cover.

Christine Craft has just such a face, and so she applied for a co-anchor position on KMBC-TV in Kansas City. According to a lawyer who represented her in a sexism suit she later brought against the station, the management of KMBC-TV "loved Christine's look." She was accordingly hired in January 1981. She was fired in August 1981 because research indicated that her appearance "hampered viewer acceptance."¹ What exactly does "hampered viewer acceptance" mean? And what does it have to do with the news? Hampered viewer acceptance means the same thing for television news as it does for any television show: Viewers do not like looking at the performer. It also means that viewers do not believe the performer, that she lacks credibility. In the case of a theatrical performance, we have a sense of what that implies: The actor does not persuade the audience that he or she is the character being portrayed. But what does lack of credibility imply in the case of a news show? What character is a co-anchor playing? And how do we decide that the performance lacks verisimilitude? Does the audience believe that the newscaster is lying, that what is reported did not in fact happen, that something important is being concealed?

It is frightening to think that this may be so, that the perception of the truth of a report rests heavily on the acceptability of the newscaster. In the ancient world, there was a tradition of banishing or killing the bearer of bad tidings. Does the television news show restore, in a curious form, this tradition? Do we banish those who tell us the news when we do not care for the face of the teller? Does television countermand the warnings we once received about the fallacy of the ad hominem argument?

If the answer to any of these questions is even a qualified "Yes," then here is an issue worthy of the attention of epistemologists. Stated in its simplest form, it is that television provides a new (or, possibly, restores an old) definition of truth:

The credibility of the teller is the ultimate test of the truth of a proposition. "Credibility" here does not refer to the past record of the teller for making statements that have survived the rigors of reality-testing. It refers only to the impression of sincerity, authenticity, vulnerability or attractiveness (choose one or more) conveyed by the actor/reporter.

This is a matter of considerable importance, for it goes beyond the question of how truth is perceived on television news shows. If on television, credibility replaces reality as the decisive test of truth-telling, political leaders need not trouble themselves very much with reality provided that their performances consistently generate a sense of verisimilitude. I suspect, for example, that the dishonor that now shrouds Richard Nixon results not from the fact that he lied but that on television he looked like a liar. Which, if true, should bring no comfort to anyone, not even veteran Nixon-haters. For the alternative possibilities are that one may look like a liar but be telling the truth; or even worse, look like a truth-teller but in fact be lying.

As a producer of a television news show, you would be well aware of these matters and would be careful to choose your cast on the basis of criteria used by David Merrick and other successful impresarios. Like them, you would then turn your attention to staging the show on principles that maximize entertainment value. You would, for example, select a musical theme for the show. All television news programs begin, end, and are somewhere in between punctuated with music. I have found very few Americans who regard this custom as peculiar, which fact I have taken as evidence for the dissolution of lines of demarcation between serious public discourse and entertainment. What has music to do with the news? Why is it there? It is there, I assume, for the same reason music is used in the theater and films—to create a mood and provide a leitmotif for the entertainment. If there were no music—as is the case when any television program is interrupted for a news flash—viewers would expect something truly alarming, possibly life-altering.

But as long as the music is there as a frame for the program, the viewer is comforted to believe that there is nothing to be greatly alarmed about; that, in fact, the events that are reported have as much relation to reality as do scenes in a play.

This perception of a news show as a stylized dramatic performance whose content has been staged largely to entertain is reinforced by several other features, including the fact that the average length of any story is forty-five seconds. While brevity does not always suggest triviality, in this case it clearly does. It is simply not possible to convey a sense of seriousness about any event if its implications are exhausted in less than one minute's time. In fact, it is quite obvious that TV news has no intention of suggesting that any story *has* any implications, for that would require viewers to continue to think about it when it is done and therefore obstruct their attending to the next story that waits panting in the wings. In any case, viewers are not provided with much opportunity to be distracted from the next story since in all likelihood it will consist of some film footage. Pictures have little difficulty in overwhelming words, and short-circuiting introspection. As a television producer, you would be certain to give both prominence and precedence to any event for which there is some sort of visual documentation. A suspected killer being brought into a police station, the angry face of a cheated consumer, a barrel going over Niagara Falls (with a person alleged to be in it), the President disembarking from a helicopter on the White House lawn—these are always fascinating or amusing, and easily satisfy the requirements of an entertaining show. It is, of course, not necessary that the visuals actually document the point of a story. Neither is it necessary to explain why such images are intruding themselves on public consciousness. Film footage justifies itself, as every television producer well knows.

It is also of considerable help in maintaining a high level of unreality that the newscasters do not pause to grimace or shiver when they speak their prefaces or epilogs to the film clips. In-

deed, many newscasters do not appear to grasp the meaning of what they are saying, and some hold to a fixed and ingratiating enthusiasm as they report on earthquakes, mass killings and other disasters. Viewers would be quite disconcerted by any show of concern or terror on the part of newscasters. Viewers, after all, are partners with the newscasters in the "Now . . . this" culture, and they expect the newscaster to play out his or her role as a character who is marginally serious but who stays well clear of authentic understanding. The viewers, for their part, will not be caught contaminating their responses with a sense of reality, any more than an audience at a play would go scurrying to call home because a character on stage has said that a murderer is loose in the neighborhood.

The viewers also know that no matter how grave any fragment of news may appear (for example, on the day I write a Marine Corps general has declared that nuclear war between the United States and Russia is inevitable), it will shortly be followed by a series of commercials that will, in an instant, defuse the import of the news, in fact render it largely banal. This is a key element in the structure of a news program and all by itself refutes any claim that television news is designed as a serious form of public discourse. Imagine what you would think of me, and this book, if I were to pause here, tell you that I will return to my discussion in a moment, and then proceed to write a few words in behalf of United Airlines or the Chase Manhattan Bank. You would rightly think that I had no respect for you and, certainly, no respect for the subject. And if I did this not once but several times in each chapter, you would think the whole enterprise unworthy of your attention. Why, then, do we not think a news show similarly unworthy? The reason, I believe, is that whereas we expect books and even other media (such as film) to maintain a consistency of tone and a continuity of content, we have no such expectation of television, and especially television news. We have become so accustomed to its discontinuities that we are no longer struck dumb, as any sane

person would be, by a newscaster who having just reported that a nuclear war is inevitable goes on to say that he will be right back after this word from Burger King; who says, in other words, "Now . . . this." One can hardly overestimate the damage that such juxtapositions do to our sense of the world as a serious place. The damage is especially massive to youthful viewers who depend so much on television for their clues as to how to respond to the world. In watching television news, they, more than any other segment of the audience, are drawn into an epistemology based on the assumption that all reports of cruelty and death are greatly exaggerated and, in any case, not to be taken seriously or responded to sanely.

I should go so far as to say that embedded in the surrealistic frame of a television news show is a theory of anticomunication, featuring a type of discourse that abandons logic, reason, sequence and rules of contradiction. In aesthetics, I believe the name given to this theory is Dadaism; in philosophy, nihilism; in psychiatry, schizophrenia. In the parlance of the theater, it is known as vaudeville.

For those who think I am here guilty of hyperbole, I offer the following description of television news by Robert MacNeil, executive editor and co-anchor of the "MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour." The idea, he writes, "is to keep everything brief, not to strain the attention of anyone but instead to provide constant stimulation through variety, novelty, action, and movement. You are required . . . to pay attention to no concept, no character, and no problem for more than a few seconds at a time."² He goes on to say that the assumptions controlling a news show are "that bite-sized is best, that complexity must be avoided, that nuances are dispensable, that qualifications impede the simple message, that visual stimulation is a substitute for thought, and that verbal precision is an anachronism."³

Robert MacNeil has more reason than most to give testimony about the television news show as vaudeville act. The "MacNeil-Lehrer Newshour" is an unusual and gracious attempt to

bring to television some of the elements of typographic discourse. The program abjures visual stimulation, consists largely of extended explanations of events and in-depth interviews (which even there means only five to ten minutes), limits the number of stories covered, and emphasizes background and coherence. But television has exacted its price for MacNeil's rejection of a show business format. By television's standards, the audience is minuscule, the program is confined to public-television stations, and it is a good guess that the combined salary of MacNeil and Lehrer is one-fifth of Dan Rather's or Tom Brokaw's.

If you were a producer of a television news show for a commercial station, you would not have the option of defying television's requirements. It would be demanded of you that you strive for the largest possible audience, and, as a consequence and in spite of your best intentions, you would arrive at a production very nearly resembling MacNeil's description. Moreover, you would include some things MacNeil does not mention. You would try to make celebrities of your newscasters. You would advertise the show, both in the press and on television itself. You would do "news briefs," to serve as an inducement to viewers. You would have a weatherman as comic relief, and a sportscaster whose language is a touch uncouth (as a way of his relating to the beer-drinking common man). You would, in short, package the whole event as any producer might who is in the entertainment business.

The result of all this is that Americans are the best entertained and quite likely the least well-informed people in the Western world. I say this in the face of the popular conceit that television, as a window to the world, has made Americans exceedingly well informed. Much depends here, of course, on what is meant by being informed. I will pass over the now tiresome polls that tell us that, at any given moment, 70 percent of our citizens do not know who is the Secretary of State or the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court. Let us consider, instead, the case

of Iran during the drama that was called the "Iranian Hostage Crisis." I don't suppose there has been a story in years that received more continuous attention from television. We may assume, then, that Americans know most of what there is to know about this unhappy event. And now, I put these questions to you: Would it be an exaggeration to say that not one American in a hundred knows what language the Iranians speak? Or what the word "Ayatollah" means or implies? Or knows any details of the tenets of Iranian religious beliefs? Or the main outlines of their political history? Or knows who the Shah was, and where he came from?

Nonetheless, everyone had an opinion about this event, for in America everyone is entitled to an opinion, and it is certainly useful to have a few when a pollster shows up. But these are opinions of a quite different order from eighteenth- or nineteenth-century opinions. It is probably more accurate to call them emotions rather than opinions, which would account for the fact that they change from week to week, as the pollsters tell us. What is happening here is that television is altering the meaning of "being informed" by creating a species of information that might properly be called *disinformation*. I am using this word almost in the precise sense in which it is used by spies in the CIA or KGB. Disinformation does not mean false information. It means misleading information—misplaced, irrelevant, fragmented or superficial information—information that creates the illusion of knowing something but which in fact leads one away from knowing. In saying this, I do not mean to imply that television news deliberately aims to deprive Americans of a coherent, contextual understanding of their world. I mean to say that when news is packaged as entertainment, that is the inevitable result. And in saying that the television news show entertains but does not inform, I am saying something far more serious than that we are being deprived of authentic information. I am saying we are losing our sense of what it means to be

well informed. Ignorance is always correctable. But what shall we do if we take ignorance to be knowledge?

Here is a startling example of how this process bedevils us. A *New York Times* article is headlined on February 15, 1983:

REAGAN MISSTATEMENTS GETTING LESS ATTENTION

The article begins in the following way:

President Reagan's aides used to become visibly alarmed at suggestions that he had given mangled and perhaps misleading accounts of his policies or of current events in general. That doesn't seem to happen much anymore.

Indeed, the President continues to make debatable assertions of fact but news accounts do not deal with them as extensively as they once did. In the view of White House officials, the declining news coverage mirrors *a decline in interest by the general public.* (my italics)

This report is not so much a news story as a story about the news, and our recent history suggests that it is not about Ronald Reagan's charm. It is about how news is defined, and I believe the story would be quite astonishing to both civil libertarians and tyrants of an earlier time. Walter Lippmann, for example, wrote in 1920: "There can be no liberty for a community which lacks the means by which to detect lies." For all of his pessimism about the possibilities of restoring an eighteenth- and nineteenth-century level of public discourse, Lippmann assumed, as did Thomas Jefferson before him, that with a well-trained press functioning as a lie-detector, the public's interest in a President's mangling of the truth would be piqued, in both senses of that word. Given the means to detect lies, he believed, the public could not be indifferent to their consequences.

But this case refutes his assumption. The reporters who cover the White House are ready and able to expose lies, and thus

create the grounds for informed and indignant opinion. But apparently the public declines to take an interest. To press reports of White House dissembling, the public has replied with Queen Victoria's famous line: "We are not amused." However, here the words mean something the Queen did not have in mind. They mean that what is not amusing does not compel their attention. Perhaps if the President's lies could be demonstrated by pictures and accompanied by music the public would raise a curious eyebrow. If a movie, like *All the President's Men*, could be made from his misleading accounts of government policy, if there were a break-in of some sort or sinister characters laundering money, attention would quite likely be paid. We do well to remember that President Nixon did not begin to come undone until his lies were given a theatrical setting at the Watergate hearings. But we do not have anything like that here. Apparently, all President Reagan does is *say* things that are not entirely true. And there is nothing entertaining in that.

But there is a subtler point to be made here. Many of the President's "misstatements" fall in the category of contradictions—mutually exclusive assertions that cannot possibly both, in the same context, be true. "In the same context" is the key phrase here, for it is context that defines contradiction. There is no problem in someone's remarking that he prefers oranges to apples, and also remarking that he prefers apples to oranges—not if one statement is made in the context of choosing a wallpaper design and the other in the context of selecting fruit for dessert. In such a case, we have statements that are opposites, but not contradictory. But if the statements are made in a single, continuous, and coherent context, then they are contradictions, and cannot both be true. Contradiction, in short, requires that statements and events be perceived as interrelated aspects of a continuous and coherent context. Disappear the context, or fragment it, and contradiction disappears. This point is nowhere made more clear to me than in conferences with my younger students about their writing. "Look here," I say. "In this para-

graph you have said one thing. And in that you have said the opposite. Which is it to be?" They are polite, and wish to please, but they are as baffled by the question as I am by the response. "I know," they will say, "but that is *there* and this is *here*." The difference between us is that I assume "there" and "here," "now" and "then," one paragraph and the next to be connected, to be continuous, to be part of the same coherent world of thought. That is the way of typographic discourse, and typography is the universe I'm "coming from," as they say. But they are coming from a different universe of discourse altogether: the "Now . . . this" world of television. The fundamental assumption of that world is not coherence but discontinuity. And in a world of discontinuities, contradiction is useless as a test of truth or merit, because contradiction does not exist.

My point is that we are by now so thoroughly adjusted to the "Now . . . this" world of news—a world of fragments, where events stand alone, stripped of any connection to the past, or to the future, or to other events—that all assumptions of coherence have vanished. And so, perforce, has contradiction. In the context of *no context*, so to speak, it simply disappears. And in its absence, what possible interest could there be in a list of what the President says *now* and what he said *then*? It is merely a rehash of old news, and there is nothing interesting or entertaining in that. The only thing to be amused about is the bafflement of reporters at the public's indifference. There is an irony in the fact that the very group that has taken the world apart should, on trying to piece it together again, be surprised that no one notices much, or cares.

For all his perspicacity, George Orwell would have been stymied by this situation; there is nothing "Orwellian" about it. The President does not have the press under his thumb. *The New York Times* and *The Washington Post* are not *Pravda*; the Associated Press is not Tass. And there is no Newspeak here. Lies have not been defined as truth nor truth as lies. All that has happened is that the public has adjusted to incoherence and been

amused into indifference. Which is why Aldous Huxley would not in the least be surprised by the story. Indeed, he prophesied its coming. He believed that it is far more likely that the Western democracies will dance and dream themselves into oblivion than march into it, single file and manacled. Huxley grasped, as Orwell did not, that it is not necessary to conceal anything from a public insensible to contradiction and narcotized by technological diversions. Although Huxley did not specify that television would be our main line to the drug, he would have no difficulty accepting Robert MacNeil's observation that "Television is the *soma* of Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World*." Big Brother turns out to be Howdy Doody.

I do not mean that the trivialization of public information is all accomplished *on* television. I mean that television is the paradigm for our conception of public information. As the printing press did in an earlier time, television has achieved the power to define the form in which news must come, and it has also defined how we shall respond to it. In presenting news to us packaged as vaudeville, television induces other media to do the same, so that the total information environment begins to mirror television.

For example, America's newest and highly successful national newspaper, *USA Today*, is modeled precisely on the format of television. It is sold on the street in receptacles that look like television sets. Its stories are uncommonly short, its design leans heavily on pictures, charts and other graphics, some of them printed in various colors. Its weather maps are a visual delight; its sports section includes enough pointless statistics to distract a computer. As a consequence, *USA Today*, which began publication in September 1982, has become the third largest daily in the United States (as of July 1984, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulations), moving quickly to overtake the *Daily News* and the *Wall Street Journal*. Journalists of a more traditional bent have criticized it for its superficiality and theatrics, but the paper's editors remain steadfast in their disregard

of typographic standards. The paper's Editor-in-Chief, John Quinn, has said: "We are not up to undertaking projects of the dimensions needed to win prizes. They don't give awards for the best investigative paragraph."⁴ Here is an astonishing tribute to the resonance of television's epistemology: In the age of television, the paragraph is becoming the basic unit of news in print media. Moreover, Mr. Quinn need not fret too long about being deprived of awards. As other newspapers join in the transformation, the time cannot be far off when awards will be given for the best investigative sentence.

It needs also to be noted here that new and successful magazines such as *People* and *Us* are not only examples of television-oriented print media but have had an extraordinary "ricochet" effect on television itself. Whereas television taught the magazines that news is nothing but entertainment, the magazines have taught television that nothing but entertainment is news. Television programs, such as "Entertainment Tonight," turn information about entertainers and celebrities into "serious" cultural content, so that the circle begins to close: Both the form and content of news become entertainment.

Radio, of course, is the least likely medium to join in the descent into a Huxleyan world of technological narcotics. It is, after all, particularly well suited to the transmission of rational, complex language. Nonetheless, and even if we disregard radio's captivation by the music industry, we appear to be left with the chilling fact that such language as radio allows us to hear is increasingly primitive, fragmented, and largely aimed at invoking visceral response; which is to say, it is the linguistic analogue to the ubiquitous rock music that is radio's principal source of income. As I write, the trend in call-in shows is for the "host" to insult callers whose language does not, in itself, go much beyond humanoid grunting. Such programs have little content, as this word used to be defined, and are merely of archeological interest in that they give us a sense of what a dialogue among Neanderthals might have been like. More to the

point, the language of radio newscasts has become, under the influence of television, increasingly decontextualized and discontinuous, so that the possibility of anyone's knowing about the world, as against merely knowing *of* it, is effectively blocked. In New York City, radio station WINS entreats its listeners to "Give us twenty-two minutes and we'll give you the world." This is said without irony, and its audience, we may assume, does not regard the slogan as the conception of a disordered mind.

And so, we move rapidly into an information environment which may rightly be called trivial pursuit. As the game of that name uses facts as a source of amusement, so do our sources of news. It has been demonstrated many times that a culture can survive misinformation and false opinion. It has not yet been demonstrated whether a culture can survive if it takes the measure of the world in twenty-two minutes. Or if the value of its news is determined by the number of laughs it provides.

8.

Shuffle Off to Bethlehem

There is an evangelical preacher on television who goes by the name of Reverend Terry. She appears to be in her early fifties, and features a coiffure of which it has been said that it cannot be mussed, only broken. Reverend Terry is energetic and folksy, and uses a style of preaching modeled on early Milton Berle. When her audiences are shown in reaction shots, they are almost always laughing. As a consequence, it would be difficult to distinguish them from audiences, say, at the Sands Hotel in Las Vegas, except for the fact that they have a slightly cleaner, more wholesome look. Reverend Terry tries to persuade them, as well as those "at home," to change their ways by finding Jesus Christ. To help her do this, she offers a "prosperity Campaign Kit," which appears to have a dual purpose: As it brings one nearer to Jesus, it also provides advice on how to increase one's bank account. This makes her followers extremely happy and confirms their predisposition to believe that prosperity is the true aim of religion. Perhaps God disagrees. As of this writing, Reverend Terry has been obliged to declare bankruptcy and temporarily halt her ministrations.

Pat Robertson is the master of ceremonies of the highly successful "700 Club," a television show and religious organization of sorts to which you can belong by paying fifteen dollars per month. (Of course, anyone with cable television can watch the show free of charge.) Reverend Robertson does his act in a much lower register than Reverend Terry. He is modest, intelligent, and has the kind of charm television viewers would asso-

ciate with a cool-headed talk-show host. His appeal to godliness is considerably more sophisticated than Reverend Terry's, at least from the standpoint of television. Indeed, he appears to use as his model of communication "Entertainment Tonight." His program includes interviews, singers and taped segments with entertainers who are born-again Christians. For example, all of the chorus girls in Don Ho's Hawaiian act are born-again, and in one segment, we are shown them both at prayer and on stage (although not at the same time). The program also includes taped reenactments of people who, having been driven to the edge of despair, are saved by the 700 Club. Such people play themselves in these finely crafted docu-dramas. In one, we are shown a woman racked with anxiety. She cannot concentrate on her wifely duties. The television shows and movies she sees induce a generalized fear of the world. Paranoia closes in. She even begins to believe that her own children are trying to kill her. As the play proceeds, we see her in front of her television set chancing upon the 700 Club. She becomes interested in its message. She allows Jesus to enter her heart. She is saved. At the end of the play, we see her going about her business, calmly and cheerfully, her eyes illuminated with peace. And so, we may say that the 700 Club has twice elevated her to a state of transcendence: first, by putting her in the presence of Jesus; second, by making her into a television star. To the uninitiated, it is not entirely clear which is the higher estate.

Toward the end of each 700 Club show, the following day's acts are announced. They are many and various. The program concludes with someone's saying, "All this and more . . . tomorrow on the 700 Club."

Jimmy Swaggart is a somewhat older-style evangelist. Though he plays the piano quite well, sings sweetly, and uses the full range of television's resources, when he gets going he favors a kind of fire-and-brimstone approach. But because this is television, he often moderates his message with a dollop of ecumenism. For example, his sermon on the question, Are the

Jews practicing blasphemy? begins by assuring his audience that they are not, by recalling Jesus' bar mitzvah, and by insisting that Christians owe the Jews a considerable debt. It ends with his indicating that with the loss of their Temple in Biblical times, the Jews have somehow lost their way. His message suggests that they are rather to be pitied than despised but that, in any case, many of them are pretty nice people.

It is the perfect television sermon—theatrical, emotional, and in a curious way comforting, even to a Jewish viewer. For television—bless its heart—is not congenial to messages of naked hate. For one thing, you never know who is watching, so it is best not to be wildly offensive. For another, haters with reddened faces and demonic gestures merely look foolish on television, as Marshall McLuhan observed years ago and Senator Joseph McCarthy learned to his dismay. Television favors moods of conciliation and is at its best when substance of any kind is muted. (One must make an exception here for those instances when preachers, like Swaggart, turn to the subject of the Devil and secular humanism. Then they are quite uncompromising in the ferocity of their assaults, partly, one may assume, because neither the Devil nor secular humanists are included in the Nielsen Ratings. Neither are they inclined to watch.)

There are at present thirty-five television stations owned and operated by religious organizations, but every television station features religious programming of one sort or another. To prepare myself for writing this chapter, I watched forty-two hours of television's version of religion, mostly the shows of Robert Schuller, Oral Roberts, Jimmy Swaggart, Jerry Falwell, Jim Bakker and Pat Robertson. Forty-two hours were entirely unnecessary. Five would have provided me with all the conclusions, of which there are two, that are fairly to be drawn.

The first is that on television, religion, like everything else, is presented, quite simply and without apology, as an entertainment. Everything that makes religion an historic, profound and

sacred human activity is stripped away; there is no ritual, no dogma, no tradition, no theology, and above all, no sense of spiritual transcendence. On these shows, the preacher is tops. God comes out as second banana.

The second conclusion is that this fact has more to do with the bias of television than with the deficiencies of these electronic preachers, as they are called. It is true enough that some of these men are uneducated, provincial and even bigoted. They certainly do not compare favorably with well-known evangelicals of an earlier period, such as Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield and Charles Finney, who were men of great learning, theological subtlety and powerful expositional skills. Nonetheless, today's television preachers are probably not greatly different in their limitations from most earlier evangelicals or from many ministers today whose activities are confined to churches and synagogues. What makes these television preachers the enemy of religious experience is not so much *their* weaknesses but the weaknesses of the medium in which they work.

Most Americans, including preachers, have difficulty accepting the truth, if they think about it at all, that not all forms of discourse can be converted from one medium to another. It is naive to suppose that something that has been expressed in one form can be expressed in another without significantly changing its meaning, texture or value. Much prose translates fairly well from one language to another, but we know that poetry does not; we may get a rough idea of the sense of a translated poem but usually everything else is lost, especially that which makes it an object of beauty. The translation makes it into something it was not. To take another example: We may find it convenient to send a condolence card to a bereaved friend, but we delude ourselves if we believe that our card conveys the same meaning as our broken and whispered words when we are present. The card not only changes the words but eliminates the context from which the words take their meaning. Similarly, we delude ourselves if we believe that most everything a

teacher normally does can be replicated with greater efficiency by a micro-computer. Perhaps some things can, but there is always the question, What is lost in the translation? The answer may even be: Everything that is significant about education.

Though it may be un-American to say it, not everything is *televisable*. Or to put it more precisely, what is televised is transformed from what it was to something else, which may or may not preserve its former essence. For the most part, television preachers have not seriously addressed this matter. They have assumed that what had formerly been done in a church or a tent, and face-to-face, can be done on television without loss of meaning, without changing the quality of the religious experience. Perhaps their failure to address the translation issue has its origin in the hubris engendered by the dazzling number of people to whom television gives them access.

"Television," Billy Graham has written, "is the most powerful tool of communication ever devised by man. Each of my prime-time 'specials' is now carried by nearly 300 stations across the U.S. and Canada, so that in a single telecast I preach to millions more than Christ did in his lifetime."¹ To this, Pat Robertson adds: "To say that the church shouldn't be involved with television is utter folly. The needs are the same, the message is the same, but the delivery can change. . . . It would be folly for the church not to get involved with the most formative force in America."²

This is gross technological naiveté. If the delivery is not the same, then the message, quite likely, is not the same. And if the context in which the message is experienced is altogether different from what it was in Jesus' time, we may assume that its social and psychological meaning is different, as well.

To come to the point, there are several characteristics of television and its surround that converge to make authentic religious experience impossible. The first has to do with the fact that there is no way to consecrate the space in which a television show is experienced. It is an essential condition of any tra-

ditional religious service that the space in which it is conducted must be invested with some measure of sacrality. Of course, a church or synagogue is designed as a place of ritual enactment so that almost anything that occurs there, even a bingo game, has a religious aura. But a religious service need not occur only in a church or synagogue. Almost any place will do, provided it is first decontaminated; that is, divested of its profane uses. This can be done by placing a cross on a wall, or candles on a table, or a sacred document in public view. Through such acts, a gymnasium or dining hall or hotel room can be transformed into a place of worship; a slice of space-time can be removed from the world of profane events, and be recreated into a reality that does not belong to our world. But for this transformation to be made, it is essential that certain rules of conduct be observed. There will be no eating or idle conversation, for example. One may be required to put on a skull cap or to kneel down at appropriate moments. Or simply to contemplate in silence. Our conduct must be congruent with the otherworldliness of the space. But this condition is not usually met when we are watching a religious television program. The activities in one's living room or bedroom or—God help us—one's kitchen are usually the same whether a religious program is being presented or "The A-Team" or "Dallas" is being presented. People will eat, talk, go to the bathroom, do push-ups or any of the things they are accustomed to doing in the presence of an animated television screen. If an audience is not immersed in an aura of mystery and symbolic otherworldliness, then it is unlikely that it can call forth the state of mind required for a nontrivial religious experience.

Moreover, the television screen itself has a strong bias toward a psychology of secularism. The screen is so saturated with our memories of profane events, so deeply associated with the commercial and entertainment worlds that it is difficult for it to be recreated as a frame for sacred events. Among other things, the viewer is at all times aware that a flick of the switch will pro-

duce a different and secular event on the screen—a hockey game, a commercial, a cartoon. Not only that, but both prior to and immediately following most religious programs, there are commercials, promos for popular shows, and a variety of other secular images and discourses, so that the main message of the screen itself is a continual promise of entertainment. Both the history and the ever-present possibilities of the television screen work against the idea that introspection or spiritual transcendence is desirable in its presence. The television screen wants you to remember that its imagery is always available for your amusement and pleasure.

The television preachers themselves are well aware of this. They know that their programs do not represent a discontinuity in commercial broadcasting but are merely part of an unbroken continuum. Indeed, many of these programs are presented at times other than traditional Sunday hours. Some of the more popular preachers are quite willing to go “head to head” with secular programs because they believe they can put on a more appealing show. Incidentally, the money to do this is no problem. Contributions to these shows run into the millions. It has been estimated that the total revenue of the electric church exceeds \$500 million a year.

I mention this only to indicate why it is possible for these preachers to match the high production costs of any strictly commercial program. And match them they do. Most of the religious shows feature sparkling fountains, floral displays, choral groups and elaborate sets. All of them take as their model for staging some well-known commercial program. Jim Bakker, for example, uses “The Merv Griffin Show” as his guide. More than occasionally, programs are done “on location,” in exotic locales with attractive and unfamiliar vistas.

In addition, exceedingly handsome people are usually in view, both on the stage and in the audience. Robert Schuller is particularly partial to celebrities, especially movie actors like Efrem Zimbalist, Jr., and Cliff Robertson, who have declared

their allegiance to him. Not only does Schuller have celebrities on his show but his advertisements use their presence to attract an audience. Indeed, I think it fair to say that attracting an audience is the main goal of these programs, just as it is for "The A-Team" and "Dallas."

To achieve this goal, the most modern methods of marketing and promotion are abundantly used, such as offering free pamphlets, Bibles and gifts, and, in Jerry Falwell's case, two free "Jesus First" pins. The preachers are forthright about how they control the content of their preaching to maximize their ratings. You shall wait a very long time indeed if you wish to hear an electronic preacher refer to the difficulties a rich man will have in gaining access to heaven. The executive director of the National Religious Broadcasters Association sums up what he calls the unwritten law of all television preachers: "You can get your share of the audience only by offering people something they want."³

You will note, I am sure, that this is an unusual religious credo. There is no great religious leader—from the Buddha to Moses to Jesus to Mohammed to Luther—who offered people what they want. Only what they need. But television is not well suited to offering people what they need. It is "user friendly." It is too easy to turn off. It is at its most alluring when it speaks the language of dynamic visual imagery. It does not accommodate complex language or stringent demands. As a consequence, what is preached on television is not anything like the Sermon on the Mount. Religious programs are filled with good cheer. They celebrate affluence. Their featured players become celebrities. Though their messages are trivial, the shows have high ratings, or rather, *because* their messages are trivial, the shows have high ratings.

I believe I am not mistaken in saying that Christianity is a demanding and serious religion. When it is delivered as easy and amusing, it is another kind of religion altogether.

There are, of course, counterarguments to the claim that tele-

vision degrades religion. Among them is that spectacle is hardly a stranger to religion. If one puts aside the Quakers and a few other austere sects, every religion tries to make itself appealing through art, music, icons and awe-inspiring ritual. The aesthetic dimension to religion is the source of its attraction to many people. This is especially true of Roman Catholicism and Judaism, which supply their congregants with haunting chants; magnificent robes and shawls; magical hats, wafers and wine; stained-glass windows; and the mysterious cadences of ancient languages. The difference between these accoutrements of religion and the floral displays, fountains and elaborate sets we see on television is that the former are not, in fact, accoutrements but integral parts of the history and doctrines of the religion itself; they require congregants to respond to them with suitable reverence. A Jew does not cover his head at prayer because a skull cap looks good on television. A Catholic does not light a votive candle to improve the look of the altar. Rabbis, priests and Presbyterian ministers do not, in the midst of a service, take testimony from movie stars to find out why they are religious people. The spectacle we find in true religions has as its purpose enchantment, not entertainment. The distinction is critical. By endowing things with magic, enchantment is the means through which we may gain access to sacredness. Entertainment is the means through which we distance ourselves from it.

The reply to this is that most of the religion available to us on television is "fundamentalist," which explicitly disdains ritual and theology in favor of direct communication with the Bible itself, that is, with God. Without ensnaring myself in a theological argument for which I am unprepared, I think it both fair and obvious to say that on television, God is a vague and subordinate character. Though His name is invoked repeatedly, the concreteness and persistence of the image of the preacher carries the clear message that it is he, not He, who must be worshipped. I do not mean to imply that the preacher wishes it to

be so; only that the power of a close-up televised face, in color, makes idolatry a continual hazard. Television is, after all, a form of graven imagery far more alluring than a golden calf. I suspect (though I have no external evidence of it) that Catholic objections to Bishop Fulton Sheen's theatrical performances on television (of several years back) sprang from the impression that viewers were misdirecting their devotions, away from God and toward Bishop Sheen, whose piercing eyes, awesome cape and stately tones were as close a resemblance to a deity as charisma allows.

Television's strongest point is that it brings personalities into our hearts, not abstractions into our heads. That is why CBS' programs about the universe were called "Walter Cronkite's Universe." One would think that the grandeur of the universe needs no assistance from Walter Cronkite. One would think wrong. CBS knows that Walter Cronkite plays better on television than the Milky Way. And Jimmy Swaggart plays better than God. For God exists only in our minds, whereas Swaggart is *there*, to be seen, admired, adored. Which is why he is the star of the show. And why Billy Graham is a celebrity, and why Oral Roberts has his own university, and why Robert Schuller has a crystal cathedral all to himself. If I am not mistaken, the word for this is blasphemy.

There is a final argument that whatever criticisms may be made of televised religion, there remains the inescapable fact that it attracts viewers by the millions. This would appear to be the meaning of the statements, quoted earlier by Billy Graham and Pat Robertson, that there is a need for it among the multitude. To which the best reply I know was made by Hannah Arendt, who, in reflecting on the products of mass culture, wrote:

This state of affairs, which indeed is equalled nowhere else in the world, can properly be called mass culture; its promoters are neither the masses nor their entertainers, but are those who try to

entertain the masses with what once was an authentic object of culture, or to persuade them that *Hamlet* can be as entertaining as *My Fair Lady*, and educational as well. The danger of mass education is precisely that it may become very entertaining indeed; there are many great authors of the past who have survived centuries of oblivion and neglect, but it is still an open question whether they will be able to survive an entertaining version of what they have to say.⁴

If we substitute the word "religion" for *Hamlet*, and the phrase "great religious traditions" for "great authors of the past," this quotation may stand as the decisive critique of televised religion. There is no doubt, in other words, that religion can be made entertaining. The question is, By doing so, do we destroy it as an "authentic object of culture"? And does the popularity of a religion that employs the full resources of vaudeville drive more traditional religious conceptions into manic and trivial displays? I have already referred to Cardinal O'Connor's embarrassing attempts to be well liked and amusing, and to a parish priest who cheerfully tries to add rock music to Catholic education. I know of one rabbi who has seriously proposed to his congregation that Luciano Pavarotti be engaged to sing Kol Nidre at a Yom Kippur service. He believes that the event would fill the synagogue as never before. Who can doubt it? But as Hannah Arendt would say, *that* is the problem, not a solution to one. As a member of the Commission on Theology, Education and the Electronic Media of the National Council of the Churches of Christ, I am aware of the deep concern among "established" Protestant religions about the tendency toward refashioning Protestant services so that they are more televisable. It is well understood at the National Council that the danger is not that religion has become the content of television shows but that television shows may become the content of religion.

9.

Reach Out and Elect Someone

In *The Last Hurrah*, Edwin O'Connor's fine novel about lusty party politics in Boston, Mayor Frank Skeffington tries to instruct his young nephew in the realities of political machinery. Politics, he tells him, is the greatest spectator sport in America. In 1966, Ronald Reagan used a different metaphor. "Politics," he said, "is just like show business."¹

Although sports has now become a major branch of show business, it still contains elements that make Skeffington's vision of politics somewhat more encouraging than Reagan's. In any sport the standard of excellence is well known to both the players and spectators, and an athlete's reputation rises and falls by his or her proximity to that standard. Where an athlete stands in relation to it cannot be easily disguised or faked, which means that David Garth can do very little to improve the image of an outfielder with a .218 batting average. It also means that a public opinion poll on the question, Who is the best woman tennis player in the world?, is meaningless. The public's opinion has nothing to do with it. Martina Navratilova's serve provides the decisive answer.

One may also note that spectators at a sporting event are usually well aware of the rules of the game and the meaning of each piece of the action. There is no way for a batter who strikes out with the bases loaded to argue the spectators into believing that he has done a useful thing for his team (except, perhaps, by reminding them that he *could* have hit into a double play). The difference between hits and strike-outs, touchdowns and fum-

bles, aces and double faults cannot be blurred, even by the pomposities and malapropisms of a Howard Cosell. If politics were like a sporting event, there would be several virtues to attach to its name: clarity, honesty, excellence.

But what virtues attach to politics if Ronald Reagan is right? Show business is not entirely without an idea of excellence, but its main business is to please the crowd, and its principal instrument is artifice. If politics is like show business, then the idea is not to pursue excellence, clarity or honesty but to *appear* as if you are, which is another matter altogether. And what the other matter is can be expressed in one word: advertising. In Joe McGinnis' book about Richard Nixon's campaign in 1968, *The Selling of the President*, he said much of what needs to be said about politics and advertising, both in his title and in the book. But not quite all. For though the selling of a President is an astonishing and degrading thing, it is only part of a larger point: In America, the fundamental metaphor for political discourse is the television commercial.

The television commercial is the most peculiar and pervasive form of communication to issue forth from the electric plug. An American who has reached the age of forty will have seen well over one million television commercials in his or her lifetime, and has close to another million to go before the first Social Security check arrives. We may safely assume, therefore, that the television commercial has profoundly influenced American habits of thought. Certainly, there is no difficulty in demonstrating that it has become an important paradigm for the structure of every type of public discourse. My major purpose here is to show how it has devastated political discourse. But there may be some value in my pointing, first, to its effect on commerce itself.

By bringing together in compact form all of the arts of show business—music, drama, imagery, humor, celebrity—the television commercial has mounted the most serious assault on capitalist ideology since the publication of *Das Kapital*. To un-

derstand why, we must remind ourselves that capitalism, like science and liberal democracy, was an outgrowth of the Enlightenment. Its principal theorists, even its most prosperous practitioners, believed capitalism to be based on the idea that both buyer and seller are sufficiently mature, well informed and reasonable to engage in transactions of mutual self-interest. If greed was taken to be the fuel of the capitalist engine, then surely rationality was the driver. The theory states, in part, that competition in the marketplace requires that the buyer not only knows what is good for him but also what is good. If the seller produces nothing of value, as determined by a rational marketplace, then he loses out. It is the assumption of rationality among buyers that spurs competitors to become winners, and winners to keep on winning. Where it is assumed that a buyer is unable to make rational decisions, laws are passed to invalidate transactions, as, for example, those which prohibit children from making contracts. In America, there even exists in law a requirement that sellers must tell the truth about their products, for if the buyer has no protection from false claims, rational decision-making is seriously impaired.

Of course, the practice of capitalism has its contradictions. Cartels and monopolies, for example, undermine the theory. But television commercials make hash of it. To take the simplest example: To be rationally considered, any claim—commercial or otherwise—must be made in language. More precisely, it must take the form of a proposition, for that is the universe of discourse from which such words as “true” and “false” come. If that universe of discourse is discarded, then the application of empirical tests, logical analysis or any of the other instruments of reason are impotent.

The move away from the use of propositions in commercial advertising began at the end of the nineteenth century. But it was not until the 1950's that the television commercial made linguistic discourse obsolete as the basis for product decisions. By substituting images for claims, the pictorial commercial

made emotional appeal, not tests of truth, the basis of consumer decisions. The distance between rationality and advertising is now so wide that it is difficult to remember that there once existed a connection between them. Today, on television commercials, propositions are as scarce as unattractive people. The truth or falsity of an advertiser's claim is simply not an issue. A McDonald's commercial, for example, is not a series of testable, logically ordered assertions. It is a drama—a mythology, if you will—of handsome people selling, buying and eating hamburgers, and being driven to near ecstasy by their good fortune. No claims are made, except those the viewer projects onto or infers from the drama. One can like or dislike a television commercial, of course. But one cannot refute it.

Indeed, we may go this far: The television commercial is not at all about the character of products to be consumed. It is about the character of the consumers of products. Images of movie stars and famous athletes, of serene lakes and macho fishing trips, of elegant dinners and romantic interludes, of happy families packing their station wagons for a picnic in the country—these tell nothing about the products being sold. But they tell everything about the fears, fancies and dreams of those who might buy them. What the advertiser needs to know is not what is right about the product but what is wrong about the buyer. And so, the balance of business expenditures shifts from *product* research to *market* research. The television commercial has oriented business away from making products of value and toward making consumers feel valuable, which means that the business of business has now become pseudo-therapy. The consumer is a patient assured by psycho-dramas.

All of this would come as a great surprise to Adam Smith, just as the transformation of politics would be equally surprising to the redoubtable George Orwell. It is true, as George Steiner has remarked, that Orwell thought of Newspeak as originating, in part, from "the verbiage of commercial advertising." But when Orwell wrote in his famous essay "The Politics of the English

Language" that politics has become a matter of "defending the indefensible," he was assuming that politics would remain a distinct, although corrupted, mode of discourse. His contempt was aimed at those politicians who would use sophisticated versions of the age-old arts of double-think, propaganda and deceit. That the defense of the indefensible would be conducted as a form of amusement did not occur to him. He feared the politician as deceiver, not as entertainer.

The television commercial has been the chief instrument in creating the modern methods of presenting political ideas. It has accomplished this in two ways. The first is by requiring its form to be used in political campaigns. It is not necessary, I take it, to say very much about this method. Everyone has noticed and worried in varying degrees about it, including former New York City mayor John Lindsay, who has proposed that political "commercials" be prohibited. Even television commentators have brought it to our attention, as for example, Bill Moyers in "The Thirty-second President," a documentary on his excellent television series "A Walk Through the 20th Century." My own awakening to the power of the television commercial as political discourse came as a result of a personal experience of a few years back, when I played a minuscule role in Ramsey Clark's Senate campaign against Jacob Javits in New York. A great believer in the traditional modes of political discourse, Clark prepared a small library of carefully articulated position papers on a variety of subjects from race relations to nuclear power to the Middle East. He filled each paper with historical background, economic and political facts, and, I thought, an enlightened sociological perspective. He might as well have drawn cartoons. In fact, Jacob Javits did draw cartoons, in a manner of speaking. If Javits had a carefully phrased position on any issue, the fact was largely unknown. He built his campaign on a series of thirty-second television commercials in which he used visual imagery, in much the same way as a McDonald's commercial, to project himself as a man of experience, virtue and piety. For all I

know, Javits believed as strongly in reason as did Ramsey Clark. But he believed more strongly in retaining his seat in the Senate. And he knew full well in what century we are living. He understood that in a world of television and other visual media, "political knowledge" means having pictures in your head more than having words. The record will show that this insight did not fail him. He won the election by the largest plurality in New York State history. And I will not labor the commonplace that any serious candidate for high political office in America requires the services of an image manager to design the kinds of pictures that will lodge in the public's collective head. I will want to return to the implications of "image politics" but it is necessary, before that, to discuss the second method by which the television commercial shapes political discourse.

Because the television commercial is the single most voluminous form of public communication in our society, it was inevitable that Americans would accommodate themselves to the philosophy of television commercials. By "accommodate," I mean that we accept them as a normal and plausible form of discourse. By "philosophy," I mean that the television commercial has embedded in it certain assumptions about the nature of communication that run counter to those of other media, especially the printed word. For one thing, the commercial insists on an unprecedented brevity of expression. One may even say, instantly. A sixty-second commercial is prolix; thirty seconds is longer than most; fifteen to twenty seconds is about average. This is a brash and startling structure for communication since, as I remarked earlier, the commercial always addresses itself to the psychological needs of the viewer. Thus it is not merely therapy. It is instant therapy. Indeed, it puts forward a psychological theory of unique axioms: The commercial asks us to believe that all problems are solvable, that they are solvable fast, and that they are solvable fast through the interventions of technology, techniques and chemistry. This is, of course, a preposterous theory about the roots of discontent, and would ap-

pear so to anyone hearing or reading it. But the commercial disdains exposition, for that takes time and invites argument. It is a very bad commercial indeed that engages the viewer in wondering about the validity of the point being made. That is why most commercials use the literary device of the pseudo-parable as a means of doing their work. Such "parables" as *The Ring Around the Collar*, *The Lost Traveler's Checks* and *The Phone Call from the Son Far Away* not only have irrefutable emotional power but, like Biblical parables, are unambiguously didactic. The television commercial is about products only in the sense that the story of Jonah is about the anatomy of whales, which is to say, it isn't. Which is to say further, it is about how one ought to live one's life. Moreover, commercials have the advantage of vivid visual symbols through which we may easily learn the lessons being taught. Among those lessons are that short and simple messages are preferable to long and complex ones; that drama is to be preferred over exposition; that being sold solutions is better than being confronted with questions about problems. Such beliefs would naturally have implications for our orientation to political discourse; that is to say, we may begin to accept as normal certain assumptions about the political domain that either derive from or are amplified by the television commercial. For example, a person who has seen one million television commercials might well believe that all political problems have fast solutions through simple measures—or ought to. Or that complex language is not to be trusted, and that all problems lend themselves to theatrical expression. Or that argument is in bad taste, and leads only to an intolerable uncertainty. Such a person may also come to believe that it is not necessary to draw any line between politics and other forms of social life. Just as a television commercial will use an athlete, an actor, a musician, a novelist, a scientist or a countess to speak for the virtues of a product in no way within their domain of expertise, television also frees politicians from the limited field of their own expertise. Political figures may

show up anywhere, at any time, doing anything; without being thought odd, presumptuous, or in any way out of place. Which is to say, they have become assimilated into the general television culture as celebrities.

Being a celebrity is quite different from being well known. Harry Truman was well known but he was not a celebrity. Whenever the public saw him or heard him, Truman was talking politics. It takes a very rich imagination to envision Harry Truman or, for that matter, his wife, making a guest appearance on "The Goldbergs" or "I Remember Mama." Politics and politicians had nothing to do with these shows, which people watched for amusement, not to familiarize themselves with political candidates and issues.

It is difficult to say exactly when politicians began to put themselves forward, intentionally, as sources of amusement. In the 1950's, Senator Everett Dirksen appeared as a guest on "What's My Line?" When he was running for office, John F. Kennedy allowed the television cameras of Ed Murrow's "Person to Person" to invade his home. When he was not running for office, Richard Nixon appeared for a few seconds on "Laugh-In," an hour-long comedy show based on the format of a television commercial. By the 1970's, the public had started to become accustomed to the notion that political figures were to be taken as part of the world of show business. In the 1980's came the deluge. Vice-presidential candidate William Miller did a commercial for American Express. So did the star of the Watergate Hearings, Senator Sam Ervin. Former President Gerald Ford joined with former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger for brief roles on "Dynasty." Massachusetts Governor Mike Dukakis appeared on "St. Elsewhere." Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill did a stint on "Cheers." Consumer advocate Ralph Nader, George McGovern and Mayor Edward Koch hosted "Saturday Night Live." Koch also played the role of a fight manager in a made-for-television movie starring James Cagney. Mrs. Nancy Reagan appeared on "Diff'rent Strokes." Would

anyone be surprised if Gary Hart turned up on "Hill Street Blues"? Or if Geraldine Ferraro played a small role as a Queens housewife in a Francis Coppola film?

Although it may go too far to say that the politician-as-celebrity has, by itself, made political parties irrelevant, there is certainly a conspicuous correlation between the rise of the former and the decline of the latter. Some readers may remember when voters barely knew who the candidate was and, in any case, were not preoccupied with his character and personal life. As a young man, I balked one November at voting for a Democratic mayoralty candidate who, it seemed to me, was both unintelligent and corrupt. "What has that to do with it?" my father protested. "All Democratic candidates are unintelligent and corrupt. Do you want the Republicans to win?" He meant to say that intelligent voters favored the party that best represented their economic interests and sociological perspective. To vote for the "best man" seemed to him an astounding and naive irrelevance. He never doubted that there were good men among Republicans. He merely understood that they did not speak for his class. He shared, with an unflinching eye, the perspective of Big Tim Sullivan, a leader of New York's Tammany Hall in its glory days. As Terence Moran recounts in his essay, "Politics 1984," Sullivan was once displeased when brought the news that the vote in his precinct was 6,382 for the Democrat and two for the Republican. In evaluating this disappointing result, Sullivan remarked, "Sure, didn't Kelly come to me to say his wife's cousin was running on the Republican line and didn't I, in the interests of domestic tranquility, give him leave to vote Republican? But what I want to know is, who else voted Republican?"²

I will not argue here the wisdom of this point of view. There may be a case for choosing the best man over party (although I know of none). The point is that television does not reveal who the best man is. In fact, television makes impossible the determination of who is better than whom, if we mean by "better"

such things as more capable in negotiation, more imaginative in executive skill, more knowledgeable about international affairs, more understanding of the interrelations of economic systems, and so on. The reason has, almost entirely, to do with "image." But not because politicians are preoccupied with presenting themselves in the best possible light. After all, who isn't? It is a rare and deeply disturbed person who does not wish to project a favorable image. But television gives image a bad name. For on television the politician does not so much offer the audience an image of himself, as offer himself as an image of the audience. And therein lies one of the most powerful influences of the television commercial on political discourse.

To understand how image politics works on television, we may use as an entry point the well-known commercial from which this chapter takes the first half of its title. I refer to the Bell Telephone romances, created by Mr. Steve Horn, in which we are urged to "Reach Out and Touch Someone." The "someone" is usually a relative who lives in Denver or Los Angeles or Atlanta—in any case, very far from where we are, and who, in a good year, we will be lucky to see on Thanksgiving Day. The "someone" used to play a daily and vital role in our lives; that is to say, used to be a member of the family. Though American culture stands vigorously opposed to the idea of family, there nonetheless still exists a residual nag that something essential to our lives is lost when we give it up. Enter Mr. Horn's commercials. These are thirty-second homilies concerned to provide a new definition of intimacy in which the telephone wire will take the place of old-fashioned co-presence. Even further, these commercials intimate a new conception of family cohesion for a nation of kinsmen who have been split asunder by automobiles, jet aircraft and other instruments of family suicide. In analyzing these commercials, Jay Rosen makes the following observation: "Horn isn't interested in saying anything, he has no message to get across. His goal is not to provide information about Bell, but to somehow bring out from the broken ties of millions of Amer-

ican lives a feeling which might focus on the telephone. . . . Horn does not express himself. You do not express yourself. Horn expresses you."³

This is the lesson of all great television commercials: They provide a slogan, a symbol or a focus that creates for viewers a comprehensive and compelling image of themselves. In the shift from party politics to television politics, the same goal is sought. We are not permitted to know who is best at being President or Governor or Senator, but whose image is best in touching and soothing the deep reaches of our discontent. We look at the television screen and ask, in the same voracious way as the Queen in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, "Mirror, mirror on the wall, who is the fairest one of all?" We are inclined to vote for those whose personality, family life, and style, as imaged on the screen, give back a better answer than the Queen received. As Xenophanes remarked twenty-five centuries ago, men always make their gods in their own image. But to this, television politics has added a new wrinkle: Those who would be gods refashion themselves into images the viewers would have them be.

And so, while image politics preserves the idea of self-interest voting, it alters the meaning of "self-interest." Big Tim Sullivan and my father voted for the party that represented their interests, but "interests" meant to them something tangible—patronage, preferential treatment, protection from bureaucracy, support for one's union or community, Thanksgiving turkeys for indigent families. Judged by this standard, blacks may be the only sane voters left in America. Most of the rest of us vote our interests, but they are largely symbolic ones, which is to say, of a psychological nature. Like television commercials, image politics is a form of therapy, which is why so much of it is charm, good looks, celebrity and personal disclosure. It is a sobering thought to recall that there are no photographs of Abraham Lincoln smiling, that his wife was in all likelihood a psychopath, and that he was subject to lengthy fits of depression. He

would hardly have been well suited for image politics. We do not want our mirrors to be so dark and so far from amusing. What I am saying is that just as the television commercial empties itself of authentic product information so that it can do its psychological work, image politics empties itself of authentic political substance for the same reason.

It follows from this that history can play no significant role in image politics. For history is of value only to someone who takes seriously the notion that there are patterns in the past which may provide the present with nourishing traditions. "The past is a world," Thomas Carlyle said, "and not a void of grey haze." But he wrote this at a time when the book was the principal medium of serious public discourse. A book is *all* history. Everything about it takes one back in time—from the way it is produced to its linear mode of exposition to the fact that the past tense is its most comfortable form of address. As no other medium before or since, the book promotes a sense of a coherent and usable past. In a conversation of books, history, as Carlyle understood it, is not only a world but a living world. It is the present that is shadowy.

But television is a speed-of-light medium, a present-centered medium. Its grammar, so to say, permits no access to the past. Everything presented in moving pictures is experienced as happening "now," which is why we must be told *in language* that a videotape we are seeing was made months before. Moreover, like its forefather, the telegraph, television needs to move fragments of information, not to collect and organize them. Carlyle was more prophetic than he could imagine: The literal gray haze that is the background void on all television screens is an apt metaphor of the notion of history the medium puts forward. In the Age of Show Business and image politics, political discourse is emptied not only of ideological content but of historical content, as well.

Czeslaw Milosz, winner of the 1980 Nobel Prize for Literature, remarked in his acceptance speech in Stockholm that our

age is characterized by a "refusal to remember"; he cited, among other things, the shattering fact that there are now more than one hundred books in print that deny that the Holocaust ever took place. The historian Carl Schorske has, in my opinion, circled closer to the truth by noting that the modern mind has grown indifferent to history because history has become useless to it; in other words, it is not obstinacy or ignorance but a sense of irrelevance that leads to the diminution of history. Television's Bill Moyers inches still closer when he says, "I worry that my own business . . . helps to make this an anxious age of agitated amnesiacs. . . . We Americans seem to know everything about the last twenty-four hours but very little of the last sixty centuries or the last sixty years."⁴ Terence Moran, I believe, lands on the target in saying that with media whose structure is biased toward furnishing images and fragments, we are deprived of access to an historical perspective. In the absence of continuity and context, he says, "bits of information cannot be integrated into an intelligent and consistent whole."⁵ We do not refuse to remember; neither do we find it exactly useless to remember. Rather, we are being rendered unfit to remember. For if remembering is to be something more than nostalgia, it requires a contextual basis—a theory, a vision, a metaphor—*something* within which facts can be organized and patterns discerned. The politics of image and instantaneous news provides no such context, is, in fact, hampered by attempts to provide any. A mirror records only what you are wearing today. It is silent about yesterday. With television, we vault ourselves into a continuous, incoherent present. "History," Henry Ford said, "is bunk." Henry Ford was a typographic optimist. "History," the Electric Plug replies, "doesn't exist."

If these conjectures make sense, then in this Orwell was wrong once again, at least for the Western democracies. He envisioned the demolition of history, but believed that it would be accomplished by the state; that some equivalent of the Ministry of Truth would systematically banish inconvenient facts and de-

stroy the records of the past. Certainly, this is the way of the Soviet Union, our modern-day Oceania. But as Huxley more accurately foretold it, nothing so crude as all that is required. Seemingly benign technologies devoted to providing the populace with a politics of image, instancy and therapy may disappear history just as effectively, perhaps more permanently, and without objection.

We ought also to look to Huxley, not Orwell, to understand the threat that television and other forms of imagery pose to the foundation of liberal democracy—namely, to freedom of information. Orwell quite reasonably supposed that the state, through naked suppression, would control the flow of information, particularly by the banning of books. In this prophecy, Orwell had history strongly on his side. For books have always been subjected to censorship in varying degrees wherever they have been an important part of the communication landscape. In ancient China, the *Analects* of Confucius were ordered destroyed by Emperor Chi Huang Ti. Ovid's banishment from Rome by Augustus was in part a result of his having written *Ars Amatoria*. Even in Athens, which set enduring standards of intellectual excellence, books were viewed with alarm. In *Areopagitica*, Milton provides an excellent review of the many examples of book censorship in Classical Greece, including the case of Protagoras, whose books were burned because he began one of his discourses with the confession that he did not know whether or not there were gods. But Milton is careful to observe that in all the cases before his own time, there were only two types of books that, as he puts it, "the magistrate cared to take notice of": books that were blasphemous and books that were libelous. Milton stresses this point because, writing almost two hundred years after Gutenberg, he knew that the magistrates of his own era, if unopposed, would disallow books of every conceivable subject matter. Milton knew, in other words, that it was in the printing press that censorship had found its true métier; that, in fact, information and ideas did not become a

profound cultural problem until the maturing of the Age of Print. Whatever dangers there may be in a word that is written, such a word is a hundred times more dangerous when stamped by a press. And the problem posed by typography was recognized early; for example, by Henry VIII, whose Star Chamber was authorized to deal with wayward books. It continued to be recognized by Elizabeth I, the Stuarts, and many other post-Gutenberg monarchs, including Pope Paul IV, in whose reign the first *Index Librorum Prohibitorum* was drawn. To paraphrase David Riesman only slightly, in a world of printing, information is the gunpowder of the mind; hence come the censors in their austere robes to dampen the explosion.

Thus, Orwell envisioned that (1) government control over (2) printed matter posed a serious threat for Western democracies. He was wrong on both counts. (He was, of course, right on both counts insofar as Russia, China and other pre-electronic cultures are concerned.) Orwell was, in effect, addressing himself to a problem of the Age of Print—in fact, to the same problem addressed by the men who wrote the United States Constitution. The Constitution was composed at a time when most free men had access to their communities through a leaflet, a newspaper or the spoken word. They were quite well positioned to share their political ideas with each other in forms and contexts over which they had competent control. Therefore, their greatest worry was the possibility of government tyranny. The Bill of Rights is largely a prescription for preventing government from restricting the flow of information and ideas. But the Founding Fathers did not foresee that tyranny by government might be superseded by another sort of problem altogether, namely, the corporate state, which through television now controls the flow of public discourse in America. I raise no strong objection to this fact (at least not here) and have no intention of launching into a standard-brand complaint against the corporate state. I merely note the fact with apprehension, as did George Gerbner, Dean of the Annenberg School of Communication, when he wrote:

Television is the new state religion run by a private Ministry of Culture (the three networks), offering a universal curriculum for all people, financed by a form of hidden taxation without representation. You pay when you wash, not when you watch, and whether or not you care to watch. . . .⁶

Earlier in the same essay, Gerbner said:

Liberation cannot be accomplished by turning [television] off. Television is for most people the most attractive thing going any time of the day or night. We live in a world in which the vast majority will not turn off. If we don't get the message from the tube, we get it through other people.

I do not think Professor Gerbner meant to imply in these sentences that there is a conspiracy to take charge of our symbolic world by the men who run the "Ministry of Culture." I even suspect he would agree with me that if the faculty of the Annenberg School of Communication were to take over the three networks, viewers would hardly notice the difference. I believe he means to say—and in any case, *I* do—that in the Age of Television, our information environment is completely different from what it was in 1783; that we have less to fear from government restraints than from television glut; that, in fact, we have no way of protecting ourselves from information disseminated by corporate America; and that, therefore, the battles for liberty must be fought on different terrains from where they once were.

For example, I would venture the opinion that the traditional civil libertarian opposition to the banning of books from school libraries and from school curricula is now largely irrelevant. Such acts of censorship are annoying, of course, and must be opposed. But they are trivial. Even worse, they are distracting, in that they divert civil libertarians from confronting those questions that have to do with the claims of new technologies.

To put it plainly, a student's freedom to read is not seriously injured by someone's banning a book on Long Island or in Anaheim or anyplace else. But as Gerbner suggests, television clearly does impair the student's freedom to read, and it does so with innocent hands, so to speak. Television does not ban books, it simply displaces them.

The fight against censorship is a nineteenth-century issue which was largely won in the twentieth. What we are confronted with now is the problem posed by the economic and symbolic structure of television. Those who run television do not limit our access to information but in fact widen it. Our Ministry of Culture is Huxleyan, not Orwellian. It does everything possible to encourage us to watch continuously. But what we watch is a medium which presents information in a form that renders it simplistic, nonsubstantive, nonhistorical and noncontextual; that is to say, information packaged as entertainment. In America, we are never denied the opportunity to amuse ourselves.

Tyrants of all varieties have always known about the value of providing the masses with amusements as a means of pacifying discontent. But most of them could not have even hoped for a situation in which the masses would ignore that which does not amuse. That is why tyrants have always relied, and still do, on censorship. Censorship, after all, is the tribute tyrants pay to the assumption that a public knows the difference between serious discourse and entertainment—and cares. How delighted would be all the kings, czars and führers of the past (and commissars of the present) to know that censorship is not a necessity when all political discourse takes the form of a jest.

10.

Teaching as an Amusing Activity

There could not have been a safer bet when it began in 1969 than that "Sesame Street" would be embraced by children, parents and educators. Children loved it because they were raised on television commercials, which they intuitively knew were the most carefully crafted entertainments on television. To those who had not yet been to school, even to those who had just started, the idea of being *taught* by a series of commercials did not seem peculiar. And that television should entertain them was taken as a matter of course.

Parents embraced "Sesame Street" for several reasons, among them that it assuaged their guilt over the fact that they could not or would not restrict their children's access to television. "Sesame Street" appeared to justify allowing a four- or five-year-old to sit transfixed in front of a television screen for unnatural periods of time. Parents were eager to hope that television could teach their children something other than which breakfast cereal has the most crackle. At the same time, "Sesame Street" relieved them of the responsibility of teaching their pre-school children how to read—no small matter in a culture where children are apt to be considered a nuisance. They could also plainly see that in spite of its faults, "Sesame Street" was entirely consonant with the prevailing spirit of America. Its use of cute puppets, celebrities, catchy tunes, and rapid-fire editing was certain to give pleasure to the children and would therefore serve as adequate preparation for their entry into a fun-loving culture.

As for educators, they generally approved of "Sesame Street," too. Contrary to common opinion, they are apt to find new methods congenial, especially if they are told that education can be accomplished more efficiently by means of the new techniques. (That is why such ideas as "teacher-proof" textbooks, standardized tests, and, now, micro-computers have been welcomed into the classroom.) "Sesame Street" appeared to be an imaginative aid in solving the growing problem of teaching Americans how to read, while, at the same time, encouraging children to love school.

We now know that "Sesame Street" encourages children to love school only if school is like "Sesame Street." Which is to say, we now know that "Sesame Street" undermines what the traditional idea of schooling represents. Whereas a classroom is a place of social interaction, the space in front of a television set is a private preserve. Whereas in a classroom, one may ask a teacher questions, one can ask nothing of a television screen. Whereas school is centered on the development of language, television demands attention to images. Whereas attending school is a legal requirement, watching television is an act of choice. Whereas in school, one fails to attend to the teacher at the risk of punishment, no penalties exist for failing to attend to the television screen. Whereas to behave oneself in school means to observe rules of public decorum, television watching requires no such observances, has no concept of public decorum. Whereas in a classroom, fun is never more than a means to an end, on television it is the end in itself.

Yet "Sesame Street" and its progeny, "The Electric Company," are not to be blamed for laughing the traditional classroom out of existence. If the classroom now begins to seem a stale and flat environment for learning, the inventors of television itself are to blame, not the Children's Television Workshop. We can hardly expect those who want to make good television shows to concern themselves with what the classroom is for. They are concerned with what television is for. This

does not mean that "Sesame Street" is not educational. It is, in fact, nothing but educational—in the sense that every television show is educational. Just as reading a book—any kind of book—promotes a particular orientation toward learning, watching a television show does the same. "The Little House on the Prairie," "Cheers" and "The Tonight Show" are as effective as "Sesame Street" in promoting what might be called the television style of learning. And this style of learning is, by its nature, hostile to what has been called book-learning or its handmaiden, school-learning. If we are to blame "Sesame Street" for anything, it is for the pretense that it is any ally of the classroom. That, after all, has been its chief claim on foundation and public money. As a television show, and a good one, "Sesame Street" does not encourage children to love school or anything about school. It encourages them to love television.

Moreover, it is important to add that whether or not "Sesame Street" teaches children their letters and numbers is entirely irrelevant. We may take as our guide here John Dewey's observation that the content of a lesson is the least important thing about learning. As he wrote in *Experience and Education*: "Perhaps the greatest of all pedagogical fallacies is the notion that a person learns only what he is studying at the time. Collateral learning in the way of formation of enduring attitudes . . . may be and often is more important than the spelling lesson or lesson in geography or history. . . . For these attitudes are fundamentally what count in the future."¹ In other words, the most important thing one learns is always something about *how* one learns. As Dewey wrote in another place, we learn what we do. Television educates by teaching children to do what television-viewing requires of them. And that is as precisely remote from what a classroom requires of them as reading a book is from watching a stage show.

Although one would not know it from consulting various recent proposals on how to mend the educational system, this point—that reading books and watching television differ en-

tirely in what they imply about learning—is the primary educational issue in America today. America is, in fact, the leading case in point of what may be thought of as the third great crisis in Western education. The first occurred in the fifth century B.C., when Athens underwent a change from an oral culture to an alphabet-writing culture. To understand what this meant, we must read Plato. The second occurred in the sixteenth century, when Europe underwent a radical transformation as a result of the printing press. To understand what this meant, we must read John Locke. The third is happening now, in America, as a result of the electronic revolution, particularly the invention of television. To understand what this means, we must read Marshall McLuhan.

We face the rapid dissolution of the assumptions of an education organized around the slow-moving printed word, and the equally rapid emergence of a new education based on the speed-of-light electronic image. The classroom is, at the moment, still tied to the printed word, although that connection is rapidly weakening. Meanwhile, television forges ahead, making no concessions to its great technological predecessor, creating new conceptions of knowledge and how it is acquired. One is entirely justified in saying that the major educational enterprise now being undertaken in the United States is not happening in its classrooms but in the home, in front of the television set, and under the jurisdiction not of school administrators and teachers but of network executives and entertainers. I don't mean to imply that the situation is a result of a conspiracy or even that those who control television want this responsibility. I mean only to say that, like the alphabet or the printing press, television has by its power to control the time, attention and cognitive habits of our youth gained the power to control their education.

This is why I think it accurate to call television a curriculum. As I understand the word, a curriculum is a specially constructed information system whose purpose is to influence,

teach, train or cultivate the mind and character of youth. Television, of course, does exactly that, and does it relentlessly. In so doing, it competes successfully with the school curriculum. By which I mean, it damn near obliterates it.

Having devoted an earlier book, *Teaching as a Conserving Activity*, to a detailed examination of the antagonistic nature of the two curriculums—television and school—I will not burden the reader or myself with a repetition of that analysis. But I would like to recall two points that I feel I did not express forcefully enough in that book and that happen to be central to this one. I refer, first, to the fact that television's principal contribution to educational philosophy is the idea that teaching and entertainment are inseparable. This entirely original conception is to be found nowhere in educational discourses, from Confucius to Plato to Cicero to Locke to John Dewey. In searching the literature of education, you will find it said by some that children will learn best when they are interested in what they are learning. You will find it said—Plato and Dewey emphasized this—that reason is best cultivated when it is rooted in robust emotional ground. You will even find some who say that learning is best facilitated by a loving and benign teacher. But no one has ever said or implied that significant learning is effectively, durably and truthfully achieved when education is entertainment. Education philosophers have assumed that becoming acculturated is difficult because it necessarily involves the imposition of restraints. They have argued that there must be a sequence to learning, that perseverance and a certain measure of perspiration are indispensable, that individual pleasures must frequently be submerged in the interests of group cohesion, and that learning to be critical and to think conceptually and rigorously do not come easily to the young but are hard-fought victories. Indeed, Cicero remarked that the purpose of education is to free the student from the tyranny of the present, which cannot be pleasurable for those, like the young, who are struggling

hard to do the opposite—that is, accommodate themselves to the present.

Television offers a delicious and, as I have said, original alternative to all of this. We might say there are three commandments that form the philosophy of the education which television offers. The influence of these commandments is observable in every type of television programming—from “Sesame Street” to the documentaries of “Nova” and “The National Geographic” to “Fantasy Island” to MTV. The commandments are as follows:

Thou shalt have no prerequisites

Every television program must be a complete package in itself. No previous knowledge is to be required. There must not be even a hint that learning is hierarchical, that it is an edifice constructed on a foundation. The learner must be allowed to enter at any point without prejudice. This is why you shall never hear or see a television program begin with the caution that if the viewer has not seen the previous programs, this one will be meaningless. Television is a nongraded curriculum and excludes no viewer for any reason, at any time. In other words, in doing away with the idea of sequence and continuity in education, television undermines the idea that sequence and continuity have anything to do with thought itself.

Thou shalt induce no perplexity

In television teaching, perplexity is a superhighway to low ratings. A perplexed learner is a learner who will turn to another station. This means that there must be nothing that has to be remembered, studied, applied or, worst of all, endured. It is assumed that any information, story or idea can be made imme-

diately accessible, since the contentment, not the growth, of the learner is paramount.

*Thou shalt avoid exposition like the ten plagues
visited upon Egypt*

Of all the enemies of television-teaching, including continuity and perplexity, none is more formidable than exposition. Arguments, hypotheses, discussions, reasons, refutations or any of the traditional instruments of reasoned discourse turn television into radio or, worse, third-rate printed matter. Thus, television-teaching always takes the form of story-telling, conducted through dynamic images and supported by music. This is as characteristic of "Star Trek" as it is of "Cosmos," of "Diff'rent Strokes" as of "Sesame Street," of commercials as of "Nova." Nothing will be taught on television that cannot be both visualized and placed in a theatrical context.

The name we may properly give to an education without prerequisites, perplexity and exposition is entertainment. And when one considers that save for sleeping there is no activity that occupies more of an American youth's time than television-viewing, we cannot avoid the conclusion that a massive reorientation toward learning is now taking place. Which leads to the second point I wish to emphasize: The consequences of this reorientation are to be observed not only in the decline of the potency of the classroom but, paradoxically, in the refashioning of the classroom into a place where both teaching and learning are intended to be vastly amusing activities.

I have already referred to the experiment in Philadelphia in which the classroom is reconstituted as a rock concert. But this is only the silliest example of an attempt to define education as a mode of entertainment. Teachers, from primary grades through college, are increasing the visual stimulation of their lessons; are reducing the amount of exposition their students must cope with; are relying less on reading and writing assign-

ments; and are reluctantly concluding that the principal means by which student interest may be engaged is entertainment. With no difficulty I could fill the remaining pages of this chapter with examples of teachers' efforts—in some instances, unconscious—to make their classrooms into second-rate television shows. But I will rest my case with "The Voyage of the Mimi," which may be taken as a synthesis, if not an apotheosis, of the New Education. "The Voyage of the Mimi" is the name of an expensive science and mathematics project that has brought together some of the most prestigious institutions in the field of education—the United States Department of Education, the Bank Street College of Education, the Public Broadcasting System, and the publishing firm Holt, Rinehart and Winston. The project was made possible by a \$3.65 million grant from the Department of Education, which is always on the alert to put its money where the future is. And the future is "The Voyage of the Mimi." To describe the project succinctly, I quote from four paragraphs in *The New York Times* of August 7, 1984:

Organized around a twenty-six-unit television series that depicts the adventures of a floating whale-research laboratory, [the project] combines television viewing with lavishly illustrated books and computer games that simulate the way scientists and navigators work. . . .

"The Voyage of the Mimi" is built around fifteen-minute television programs that depict the adventures of four young people who accompany two scientists and a crusty sea captain on a voyage to monitor the behavior of humpback whales off the coast of Maine. The crew of the converted tuna trawler navigates the ship, tracks down the whales and struggles to survive on an uninhabited island after a storm damages the ship's hull. . . .

Each dramatic episode is then followed by a fifteen-minute documentary on related themes. One such documentary involved a visit by one of the teen-age actors to Ted Taylor, a nuclear physicist in Greenport, L.I., who has devised a way of purifying sea water by freezing it.

The television programs, which teachers are free to record off the air and use at their convenience, are supplemented by a series of books and computer exercises that pick up four academic themes that emerge naturally from the story line: map and navigational skills, whales and their environment, ecological systems and computer literacy.

The television programs have been broadcast over PBS; the books and computer software have been provided by Holt, Rinehart and Winston; the educational expertise by the faculty of the Bank Street College. Thus, "The Voyage of the Mimi" is not to be taken lightly. As Frank Withrow of the Department of Education remarked, "We consider it the flagship of what we are doing. It is a model that others will begin to follow." Everyone involved in the project is enthusiastic, and extraordinary claims of its benefits come trippingly from their tongues. Janice Trebbi Richards of Holt, Rinehart and Winston asserts, "Research shows that learning increases when information is presented in a dramatic setting, and television can do this better than any other medium." Officials of the Department of Education claim that the appeal of integrating three media—television, print, and computers—lies in their potential for cultivating higher-order thinking skills. And Mr. Withrow is quoted as saying that projects like "The Voyage of the Mimi" could mean great financial savings, that in the long run "it is cheaper than anything else we do." Mr. Withrow also suggested that there are many ways of financing such projects. "With 'Sesame Street,'" he said, "it took five or six years, but eventually you can start bringing in the money with T-shirts and cookie jars."

We may start thinking about what "The Voyage of the Mimi" signifies by recalling that the idea is far from original. What is here referred to as "integrating three media" or a "multi-media presentation" was once called "audio-visual aids," used by teachers for years, usually for the modest purpose of enhancing

student interest in the curriculum. Moreover, several years ago, the Office of Education (as the Department was then called) supplied funds to WNET for a similarly designed project called "Watch Your Mouth," a series of television dramatizations in which young people inclined to misuse the English language fumbled their way through a variety of social problems. Linguists and educators prepared lessons for teachers to use in conjunction with each program. The dramatizations were compelling—although not nearly as good as "Welcome Back, Kotter," which had the unassailable advantage of John Travolta's charisma—but there exists no evidence that students who were required to view "Watch Your Mouth" increased their competence in the use of the English language. Indeed, since there is no shortage of mangled English on everyday commercial television, one wondered at the time why the United States government would have paid anyone to go to the trouble of producing additional ineptitudes as a source of classroom study. A videotape of any of David Susskind's programs would provide an English teacher with enough linguistic aberrations to fill a semester's worth of analysis.

Nonetheless, the Department of Education has forged ahead, apparently in the belief that ample evidence—to quote Ms. Richards again—"shows that learning increases when information is presented in a dramatic setting, and that television can do this better than any other medium." The most charitable response to this claim is that it is misleading. George Comstock and his associates have reviewed 2,800 studies on the general topic of television's influence on behavior, including cognitive processing, and are unable to point to persuasive evidence that "learning increases when information is presented in a dramatic setting."² Indeed, in studies conducted by Cohen and Salomon; Meringoff; Jacoby, Hoyer and Sheluga; Stauffer, Frost and Rybolt; Stern; Wilson; Neuman; Katz, Adoni and Parness; and Gunter, quite the opposite conclusion is justified.³ Jacoby et al. found, for example, that only 3.5 percent of viewers were

able to answer successfully twelve true/false questions concerning two thirty-second segments of commercial television programs and advertisements. Stauffer et al. found in studying students' responses to a news program transmitted via television, radio and print, that print significantly increased correct responses to questions regarding the names of people and numbers contained in the material. Stern reported that 51 percent of viewers could not recall a single item of news a few minutes after viewing a news program on television. Wilson found that the average television viewer could retain only 20 percent of the information contained in a fictional televised news story. Katz et al. found that 21 percent of television viewers could not recall any news items within one hour of broadcast. On the basis of his and other studies, Salomon has concluded that "the meanings secured from television are more likely to be segmented, concrete and less inferential, and those secured from reading have a higher likelihood of being better tied to one's stored knowledge and thus are more likely to be inferential."⁴ In other words, so far as many reputable studies are concerned, television viewing does not significantly increase learning, is inferior to and less likely than print to cultivate higher-order, inferential thinking.

But one must not make too much of the rhetoric of grantsmanship. We are all inclined to transform our hopes into tenuous claims when an important project is at stake. Besides, I have no doubt that Ms. Richards can direct us to several studies that lend support to her enthusiasm. The point is that if you want money for the redundant purpose of getting children to watch even more television than they already do—and dramatizations at that—you have to escalate the rhetoric to Herculean proportions.

What is of greatest significance about "The Voyage of the Mimi" is that the content selected was obviously chosen because it is eminently *televisable*. Why are these students studying the behavior of humpback whales? How critical is it that the

"academic themes" of navigational and map-reading skills be learned? Navigational skills have never been considered an "academic theme" and in fact seem singularly inappropriate for most students in big cities. Why has it been decided that "whales and their environment" is a subject of such compelling interest that an entire year's work should be given to it?

I would suggest that "The Voyage of the Mimi" was conceived by someone's asking the question, What is television good for?, not, What is education good for? Television is good for dramatizations, shipwrecks, seafaring adventures, crusty old sea captains, and physicists being interviewed by actor-celebrities. And that, of course, is what we have got in "The Voyage of the Mimi." The fact that this adventure sit-com is accompanied by lavishly illustrated books and computer games only underscores that the television presentation controls the curriculum. The books whose pictures the students will scan and the computer games the students will play are dictated by the content of the television shows, not the other way around. Books, it would appear, have now become an audio-visual aid; the principal carrier of the content of education is the television show, and its principal claim for a preeminent place in the curriculum is that it is entertaining. Of course, a television production can be used to stimulate interest in lessons, or even as the focal point of a lesson. But what is happening here is that the content of the school curriculum is being determined by the character of television, and even worse, that character is apparently not included as part of what is studied. One would have thought that the school room is the proper place for students to inquire into the ways in which media of all kinds—including television—shape people's attitudes and perceptions. Since our students will have watched approximately sixteen thousand hours of television by high school's end, questions should have arisen, even in the minds of officials at the Department of Education, about who will teach our students how to look at television, and when not to, and with what critical equipment when

they do. "The Voyage of the Mimi" project bypasses these questions; indeed, hopes that the students will immerse themselves in the dramatizations in the same frame of mind used when watching "St. Elsewhere" or "Hill Street Blues." (One may also assume that what is called "computer literacy" does not involve raising questions about the cognitive biases and social effects of the computer, which, I would venture, are the most important questions to address about new technologies.)

"The Voyage of the Mimi," in other words, spent \$3.65 million for the purpose of using media in exactly the manner that media merchants want them to be used—mindlessly and invisibly, as if media themselves have no epistemological or political agenda. And, in the end, what will the students have learned? They will, to be sure, have learned something about whales, perhaps about navigation and map reading, most of which they could have learned just as well by other means. Mainly, they will have learned that learning is a form of entertainment or, more precisely, that anything worth learning can take the form of an entertainment, and ought to. And they will not rebel if their English teacher asks them to learn the eight parts of speech through the medium of rock music. Or if their social studies teacher sings to them the facts about the War of 1812. Or if their physics comes to them on cookies and T-shirts. Indeed, they will expect it and thus will be well prepared to receive their politics, their religion, their news and their commerce in the same delightful way.

II.

The Huxleyan Warning

There are two ways by which the spirit of a culture may be shriveled. In the first—the Orwellian—culture becomes a prison. In the second—the Huxleyan—culture becomes a burlesque.

No one needs to be reminded that our world is now marred by many prison-cultures whose structure Orwell described accurately in his parables. If one were to read both *1984* and *Animal Farm*, and then for good measure, Arthur Koestler's *Darkness at Noon*, one would have a fairly precise blueprint of the machinery of thought-control as it currently operates in scores of countries and on millions of people. Of course, Orwell was not the first to teach us about the spiritual devastations of tyranny. What is irreplaceable about his work is his insistence that it makes little difference if our wardens are inspired by right- or left-wing ideologies. The gates of the prison are equally impenetrable, surveillance equally rigorous, icon-worship equally pervasive.

What Huxley teaches is that in the age of advanced technology, spiritual devastation is more likely to come from an enemy with a smiling face than from one whose countenance exudes suspicion and hate. In the Huxleyan prophecy, Big Brother does not watch us, by his choice. We watch him, by ours. There is no need for wardens or gates or Ministries of Truth. When a population becomes distracted by trivia, when cultural life is re-defined as a perpetual round of entertainments, when serious public conversation becomes a form of baby-talk, when, in

short, a people become an audience and their public business a vaudeville act, then a nation finds itself at risk; culture-death is a clear possibility.

In America, Orwell's prophecies are of small relevance, but Huxley's are well under way toward being realized. For America is engaged in the world's most ambitious experiment to accommodate itself to the technological distractions made possible by the electric plug. This is an experiment that began slowly and modestly in the mid-nineteenth century and has now, in the latter half of the twentieth, reached a perverse maturity in America's consuming love-affair with television. As nowhere else in the world, Americans have moved far and fast in bringing to a close the age of the slow-moving printed word, and have granted to television sovereignty over all of their institutions. By ushering in the Age of Television, America has given the world the clearest available glimpse of the Huxleyan future.

Those who speak about this matter must often raise their voices to a near-hysterical pitch, inviting the charge that they are everything from wimps to public nuisances to Jeremiahs. But they do so because what they want others to see appears benign, when it is not invisible altogether. An Orwellian world is much easier to recognize, and to oppose, than a Huxleyan. Everything in our background has prepared us to know and resist a prison when the gates begin to close around us. We are not likely, for example, to be indifferent to the voices of the Sakharovs and the Timmermans and the Walesas. We take arms against such a sea of troubles, buttressed by the spirit of Milton, Bacon, Voltaire, Goethe and Jefferson. But what if there are no cries of anguish to be heard? Who is prepared to take arms against a sea of amusements? To whom do we complain, and when, and in what tone of voice, when serious discourse dissolves into giggles? What is the antidote to a culture's being drained by laughter?

I fear that our philosophers have given us no guidance in this

matter. Their warnings have customarily been directed against those consciously formulated ideologies that appeal to the worst tendencies in human nature. But what is happening in America is not the design of an articulated ideology. No *Mein Kampf* or *Communist Manifesto* announced its coming. It comes as the unintended consequence of a dramatic change in our modes of public conversation. But it is an ideology nonetheless, for it imposes a way of life, a set of relations among people and ideas, about which there has been no consensus, no discussion and no opposition. Only compliance. Public consciousness has not yet assimilated the point that technology is ideology. This, in spite of the fact that before our very eyes technology has altered every aspect of life in America during the past eighty years. For example, it would have been excusable in 1905 for us to be unprepared for the cultural changes the automobile would bring. Who could have suspected then that the automobile would tell us how we were to conduct our social and sexual lives? Would reorient our ideas about what to do with our forests and cities? Would create new ways of expressing our personal identity and social standing?

But it is much later in the game now, and ignorance of the score is inexcusable. To be unaware that a technology comes equipped with a program for social change, to maintain that technology is neutral, to make the assumption that technology is always a friend to culture is, at this late hour, stupidity plain and simple. Moreover, we have seen enough by now to know that technological changes in our modes of communication are even more ideology-laden than changes in our modes of transportation. Introduce the alphabet to a culture and you change its cognitive habits, its social relations, its notions of community, history and religion. Introduce the printing press with movable type, and you do the same. Introduce speed-of-light transmission of images and you make a cultural revolution. Without a vote. Without polemics. Without guerrilla resistance. Here is ideology, pure if not serene. Here is ideology without

words, and all the more powerful for their absence. All that is required to make it stick is a population that devoutly believes in the inevitability of progress. And in this sense, all Americans are Marxists, for we believe nothing if not that history is moving us toward some preordained paradise and that technology is the force behind that movement.

Thus, there are near insurmountable difficulties for anyone who has written such a book as this, and who wishes to end it with some remedies for the affliction. In the first place, not everyone believes a cure is needed, and in the second, there probably isn't any. But as a true-blue American who has imbibed the unshakable belief that where there is a problem, there must be a solution, I shall conclude with the following suggestions.

We must, as a start, not delude ourselves with preposterous notions such as the straight Luddite position as outlined, for example, in Jerry Mander's *Four Arguments for the Elimination of Television*. Americans will not shut down any part of their technological apparatus, and to suggest that they do so is to make no suggestion at all. It is almost equally unrealistic to expect that nontrivial modifications in the availability of media will ever be made. Many civilized nations limit by law the amount of hours television may operate and thereby mitigate the role television plays in public life. But I believe that this is not a possibility in America. Once having opened the Happy Medium to full public view, we are not likely to countenance even its partial closing. Still, some Americans have been thinking along these lines. As I write, a story appears in *The New York Times* (September 27, 1984) about the plans of the Farmington, Connecticut, Library Council to sponsor a "TV Turnoff." It appears that such an effort was made the previous year, the idea being to get people to stop watching television for one month. The *Times* reports that the turnoff the previous January was widely noted by the media. Ms. Ellen Babcock, whose family participated, is quoted as saying, "It will be interesting to see if the

impact is the same this year as last year, when we had terrific media coverage." In other words, Ms. Babcock hopes that by watching television, people will learn that they ought to stop watching television. It is hard to imagine that Ms. Babcock does not see the irony in this position. It is an irony that I have confronted many times in being told that I must appear on television to promote a book that warns people against television. Such are the contradictions of a television-based culture.

In any case, of how much help is a one-month turnoff? It is a mere pittance; that is to say, a penance. How comforting it must be when the folks in Farmington are done with their punishment and can return to their true occupation. Nonetheless, one applauds their effort, as one must applaud the efforts of those who see some relief in limiting certain kinds of content on television—for example, excessive violence, commercials on children's shows, etc. I am particularly fond of John Lindsay's suggestion that political commercials be banned from television as we now ban cigarette and liquor commercials. I would gladly testify before the Federal Communications Commission as to the manifold merits of this excellent idea. To those who would oppose my testimony by claiming that such a ban is a clear violation of the First Amendment, I would offer a compromise: Require all political commercials to be preceded by a short statement to the effect that common sense has determined that watching political commercials is hazardous to the intellectual health of the community.

I am not very optimistic about anyone's taking this suggestion seriously. Neither do I put much stock in proposals to improve the quality of television programs. Television, as I have implied earlier, serves us most usefully when presenting junk-entertainment; it serves us most ill when it co-opts serious modes of discourse—news, politics, science, education, commerce, religion—and turns them into entertainment packages. We would all be better off if television got worse, not better.

"The A-Team" and "Cheers" are no threat to our public health. "60 Minutes," "Eye-Witness News" and "Sesame Street" are.

The problem, in any case, does not reside in *what* people watch. The problem is in *that* we watch. The solution must be found in *how* we watch. For I believe it may fairly be said that we have yet to learn what television is. And the reason is that there has been no worthwhile discussion, let alone widespread public understanding, of what information is and how it gives direction to a culture. There is a certain poignancy in this, since there are no people who more frequently and enthusiastically use such phrases as "the information age," "the information explosion," and "the information society." We have apparently advanced to the point where we have grasped the idea that a change in the forms, volume, speed and context of information *means* something, but we have not got any further.

What is information? Or more precisely, *what are* information? What are its various forms? What conceptions of intelligence, wisdom and learning does each form insist upon? What conceptions does each form neglect or mock? What are the main psychic effects of each form? What is the relation between information and reason? What is the kind of information that best facilitates thinking? Is there a moral bias to each information form? What does it mean to say that there is too much information? How would one know? What redefinitions of important cultural meanings do new sources, speeds, contexts and forms of information require? Does television, for example, give a new meaning to "piety," to "patriotism," to "privacy"? Does television give a new meaning to "judgment" or to "understanding"? How do different forms of information persuade? Is a newspaper's "public" different from television's "public"? How do different information forms dictate the type of content that is expressed?

These questions, and dozens more like them, are the means through which it might be possible for Americans to begin talking back to their television sets, to use Nicholas Johnson's

phrase. For no medium is excessively dangerous if its users understand what its dangers are. It is not important that those who ask the questions arrive at my answers or Marshall McLuhan's (quite different answers, by the way). This is an instance in which the asking of the questions is sufficient. To ask is to break the spell. To which I might add that questions about the psychic, political and social effects of information are as applicable to the computer as to television. Although I believe the computer to be a vastly overrated technology, I mention it here because, clearly, Americans have accorded it their customary mindless inattention; which means they will use it as they are told, without a whimper. Thus, a central thesis of computer technology—that the principal difficulty we have in solving problems stems from insufficient data—will go unexamined. Until, years from now, when it will be noticed that the massive collection and speed-of-light retrieval of data have been of great value to large-scale organizations but have solved very little of importance to most people and have created at least as many problems for them as they may have solved.

In any case, the point I am trying to make is that only through a deep and unfailing awareness of the structure and effects of information, through a demystification of media, is there any hope of our gaining some measure of control over television, or the computer, or any other medium. How is such media consciousness to be achieved? There are only two answers that come to mind, one of which is nonsense and can be dismissed almost at once; the other is desperate but it is all we have.

The nonsensical answer is to create television programs whose intent would be, not to get people to stop watching television but to demonstrate how television ought to be viewed, to show how television recreates and degrades our conception of news, political debate, religious thought, etc. I imagine such demonstrations would of necessity take the form of parodies, along the lines of "Saturday Night Live" and "Monty Python,"

the idea being to induce a nationwide horse laugh over television's control of public discourse. But, naturally, television would have the last laugh. In order to command an audience large enough to make a difference, one would have to make the programs vastly amusing, in the television style. Thus, the act of criticism itself would, in the end, be co-opted by television. The parodists would become celebrities, would star in movies, and would end up making television commercials.

The desperate answer is to rely on the only mass medium of communication that, in theory, is capable of addressing the problem: our schools. This is the conventional American solution to all dangerous social problems, and is, of course, based on a naive and mystical faith in the efficacy of education. The process rarely works. In the matter at hand, there is even less reason than usual to expect it to. Our schools have not yet even got around to examining the role of the printed word in shaping our culture. Indeed, you will not find two high school seniors in a hundred who could tell you—within a five-hundred-year margin of error—when the alphabet was invented. I suspect most do not even know that the alphabet *was* invented. I have found that when the question is put to them, they appear puzzled, as if one had asked, When were trees invented, or clouds? It is the very principle of myth, as Roland Barthes pointed out, that it transforms history into nature, and to ask of our schools that they engage in the task of de-mythologizing media is to ask something the schools have never done.

And yet there is reason to suppose that the situation is not hopeless. Educators are not unaware of the effects of television on their students. Stimulated by the arrival of the computer, they discuss it a great deal—which is to say, they have become somewhat "media conscious." It is true enough that much of their consciousness centers on the question, How can we use television (or the computer, or word processor) to control education? They have not yet got to the question, How can we use education to control television (or the computer, or word pro-

cessor)? But our reach for solutions ought to exceed our present grasp, or what's our dreaming for? Besides, it is an acknowledged task of the schools to assist the young in learning how to interpret the symbols of their culture. That this task should now require that they learn how to distance themselves from their forms of information is not so bizarre an enterprise that we cannot hope for its inclusion in the curriculum; even hope that it will be placed at the center of education.

What I suggest here as a solution is what Aldous Huxley suggested, as well. And I can do no better than he. He believed with H. G. Wells that we are in a race between education and disaster, and he wrote continuously about the necessity of our understanding the politics and epistemology of media. For in the end, he was trying to tell us that what afflicted the people in *Brave New World* was not that they were laughing instead of thinking, but that they did not know what they were laughing about and why they had stopped thinking.

Notes

Chapter 1: The Medium Is the Metaphor

1. As quoted in the *Wisconsin State Journal*, August 24, 1983, Section 3, page 1.
2. Cassirer, p. 43.
3. Frye, p. 227.

Chapter 2: Media as Epistemology

1. Frye, p. 217.
2. Frye, p. 218.
3. Frye, p. 218.
4. As quoted in Ong, "Literacy and the Future of Print," pp. 201–202.
5. Ong, *Orality*, p. 35.
6. Ong, *Orality*, p. 109.
7. Jerome Bruner, in *Studies in Cognitive Growth*, states that growth is "as much from the outside in as from the inside out," and that "much of [cognitive growth] consists in a human being's becoming linked with culturally transmitted 'amplifiers' of motoric, sensory, and reflective capacities." (pp. 1–2)

According to Goody, in *The Domestication of the Savage Mind*, "[writing] changes the nature of the representations of the world (cognitive processes) for those who cannot [read]." He continues: "The existence of the alphabet therefore changes the type of data that an individual is dealing with, and it changes the repertoire of programmes he has available for treating his data." (p. 110)

Julian Jaynes, in *The Origins of Consciousness in the Breakdown of*

the Bicameral Mind, states that the role of "writing in the breakdown of the bicameral voices is tremendously important." He claims that the written word served as a "replacement" for the hallucinogenic image, and took up the right hemispheric function of sorting out and fitting together data.

Walter Ong, in *The Presence of the Word*, and Marshall McLuhan, in *Understanding Media*, stress media's effects on the variations in the ratio and balance among the senses. One might add that as early as 1938, Alfred North Whitehead (in *Modes of Thought*) called attention to the need for a thorough study of the effects of changes in media on the organization of the sensorium.

Chapter 3: Typographic America

1. Franklin, p. 175.
2. Hart, p. 8.
3. Hart, p. 8.
4. Hart, p. 8.
5. Hart, p. 15.
6. Lockridge, p. 184.
7. Lockridge, p. 184.
8. Hart, p. 47.
9. Mumford, p. 136.
10. Stone, p. 42.
11. Hart, p. 31.
12. Boorstin, p. 315.
13. Boorstin, p. 315.
14. Hart, p. 39.
15. Hart, p. 45.
16. Fast, p. x (in Introduction).
17. This press was not the first established on the American continent. The Spanish had established a printing office in Mexico a hundred years earlier.
18. Mott, p. 7.
19. Boorstin, p. 320.
20. Mott, p. 9.
21. Lee, p. 10.

22. Boorstin, p. 326.
23. Boorstin, p. 327.
24. Hart, p. 27.
25. Tocqueville, p. 58.
26. Tocqueville, pp. 5-6.
27. Hart, p. 86.
28. Curti, pp. 353-354.
29. Hart, p. 153.
30. Hart, p. 74.
31. Curti, p. 337.
32. Hart, p. 102.
33. Berger, p. 183.
34. Curti, p. 356.
35. Berger, p. 158.
36. Berger, p. 158.
37. Berger, p. 158.
38. Curti, p. 356.
39. Twain, p. 161.
40. Hofstadter, p. 145.
41. Hofstadter, p. 19.
42. Tocqueville, p. 260.
43. Miller, p. 269.
44. Miller, p. 271.
45. Marx, p. 150.

Chapter 4: The Typographic Mind

1. Sparks, p. 4.
2. Sparks, p. 11.
3. Sparks, p. 87.
4. Questions were continuously raised about the accuracy of the transcriptions of these debates. Robert Hitt was the verbatim reporter for the debates, and he was accused of repairing Lincoln's "illiteracies." The accusations were made, of course, by Lincoln's political enemies, who, perhaps, were dismayed by the impression Lincoln's performances were making on the country. Hitt emphatically denied he had "doctored" any of Lincoln's speeches.

5. Hudson, p. 5.
6. Sparks, p. 86.
7. Mill, p. 64.
8. Hudson, p. 110.
9. Paine, p. 6.
10. Hudson, p. 132.
11. Perry Miller, p. 15.
12. Hudson, p. 65.
13. Hudson, p. 143.
14. Perry Miller, p. 119.
15. Perry Miller, p. 140.
16. Perry Miller, pp. 140–141.
17. Perry Miller, p. 120.
18. Perry Miller, p. 153.
19. Presbrey, p. 244.
20. Presbrey, p. 126.
21. Presbrey, p. 157.
22. Presbrey, p. 235.
23. Anderson, p. 17. In this connection, it is worth citing a letter, dated January 15, 1787, written by Thomas Jefferson to Monsieur de Crève-coeur. In his letter, Jefferson complained that the English were trying to claim credit for an American invention: making the circumference of a wheel out of one single piece of wood. Jefferson speculated that Jersey farmers learned how to do this from their reading of Homer, who described the process clearly. The English must have copied the procedure from Americans, Jefferson wrote, "because ours are the only farmers who can read Homer."

Chapter 5: The Peek-a-Boo World

1. Thoreau, p. 36.
2. Harlow, p. 100.
3. Czitrom, pp. 15–16.
4. Sontag, p. 165.
5. Newhall, p. 33.
6. Salomon, p. 36.

7. Sontag, p. 20.
8. Sontag, p. 20.

Chapter 6: *The Age of Show Business*

1. On July 20, 1984, *The New York Times* reported that the Chinese National Television network had contracted with CBS to broadcast sixty-four hours of CBS programming in China. Contracts with NBC and ABC are sure to follow. One hopes that the Chinese understand that such transactions are of great political consequence. The Gang of Four is as nothing compared with the Gang of Three.
2. This story was carried by several newspapers, including the *Wisconsin State Journal*, February 24, 1983, Section 4, p. 2.
3. As quoted in *The New York Times*, June 7, 1984, Section A, p. 20.

Chapter 7: "Now . . . This"

1. For a fairly thorough report on Ms. Craft's suit, see *The New York Times*, July 29, 1983.
2. MacNeil, p. 2.
3. MacNeil, p. 4.
4. See *Time*, July 9, 1984, p. 69.

Chapter 8: *Shuffle Off to Bethlehem*

1. Graham, pp. 5-8. For a detailed analysis of Graham's style, see Michael Real's *Mass Mediated Culture*. For an amusing and vitriolic one, see Roland Barthes' "Billy Graham at the Winter Cyclo-dome," in *The Eiffel Tower and Other Mythologies*. Barthes says, "If God really does speak through the mouth of Dr. Graham, then God is a real blockhead."
2. As quoted in "Religion in Broadcasting," by Robert Abelman and Kimberly Neuendorf, p. 2. This study was funded by a grant from Unda-USA, Washington, D.C.
3. Armstrong, p. 137.
4. Arendt, p. 352.

Chapter 9: Reach Out and Elect Someone

1. Drew, p. 263.
2. Moran, p. 122.
3. Rosen, p. 162.
4. Quoted from a speech given on March, 27, 1984, at the Jewish Museum in New York City on the occasion of a conference of the National Jewish Archive of Broadcasting.
5. Moran, p. 125.
6. From a speech given at the twenty-fourth Media Ecology Conference, April 26, 1982, in Saugerties, New York. For a full account of Dean Gerbner's views, see "Television: The New State Religion," *Et cetera* 34:2 (June, 1977): 145-150.

Chapter 10: Teaching as an Amusing Activity

1. Dewey, p. 48.
2. G. Comstock, S. Chaffee, N. Katzman, M. McCombs, and D. Roberts, *Television and Human Behavior* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1978).
3. A. Cohen and G. Salomon, "Children's Literate Television Viewing: Surprises and Possible Explanations," *Journal of Communication* 29 (1979): 156-163; L. M. Meringoff, "What Pictures Can and Can't Do for Children's Story Comprehension," paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association, April, 1982; J. Jacoby, W. D. Hoyer and D. A. Sheluga, *Miscomprehension of Televised Communications* (New York: The Educational Foundation of the American Association of Advertising Agencies, 1980); J. Stauffer, R. Frost and W. Rybolt, "Recall and Learning from Broadcast News: Is Print Better?," *Journal of Broadcasting* (Summer, 1981): 253-262; A. Stern, "A Study for the National Association for Broadcasting," in M. Barret (ed.), *The Politics of Broadcasting, 1971-1972* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973); C. E. Wilson, "The Effect of a Medium on Loss of Information," *Journalism Quarterly* 51 (Spring, 1974): 111-115; W. R. Neuman, "Patterns of Recall Among Television News Viewers," *Public Opinion Quarterly* 40 (1976): 118-125; E. Katz, H. Adoni

and P. Parness, "Remembering the News: What the Pictures Add to Recall," *Journalism Quarterly* 54 (1977): 233–242; B. Gunter, "Remembering Television News: Effects of Picture Content," *Journal of General Psychology* 102 (1980): 127–133.

4. Salomon, p. 81.

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CUTTING THROUGH...TELEVISION INTERFERENCE

Television interference can come from several sources and take various forms. Before describing the characteristics of each type, let's run through the basic checks.

BASIC CHECKS

- Check connections.
- Disconnect all accessories.
- Perform the equipment substitution test.
- Check with neighbours.

For these tests, refer to the brochure:
**CUTTING THROUGH...
RADIO INTERFERENCE.**



After making sure equipment is installed in accordance with the relevant standards, subscribers to cable television or direct-to-home satellite service should contact their supplier.

IF THE PROBLEM PERSISTS...

1. INTERFERENCE FROM ELECTRICAL SOURCES

Many electrical devices, such as electrical motors, tools and appliances, can cause interference. The types of interference differ greatly from one electrical device to another. Interference caused by a computer, for example, is not the same as that produced by a household appliance.

Thermostats on heating equipment, rheostat (dimmer) switches, fluorescent lights, neon lights, electric heating pads and blankets and doorbell transformers are also in this category.

These lines and bright spots, which vary in intensity, are often accompanied by crackling and buzzing noises, and can also affect AM and FM radio reception.



Normal picture



Interference caused by a thermostat

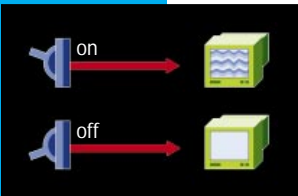


Interference caused by a computer



Interference caused by a motor

This sporadic interference generally occurs when an electrical accessory or appliance starts up or is operating.



How do I find the source of the interference?

The breaker test helps in locating the source of interference inside the home and is explained in detail in the brochure: Cutting through... radio interference.

IF THE PROBLEM PERSISTS...

The source of interference is probably outside your home.

Check with your closest neighbours. The place where the interference is the most intense may indicate the source of the disturbance. If one of your neighbours has a similar problem, ask him, or her, to run the breaker test to try to locate the faulty equipment. A household appliance or electrical device rarely causes interference that extends beyond a few houses.

IF THE PROBLEM PERSISTS...

The interference may come from electrical power lines. The power grid that supplies your neighbourhood is often a source of interference.

■ Electrical power lines



Normal picture



Electrical power line

If this type of disruption appears and varies in intensity depending on weather conditions (dry or damp weather, or wind), and if the breaker test excludes a source inside the home, the interference may be caused by faulty components associated with the electrical power lines near your home.

This type of interference can also affect AM, and sometimes FM, radio reception.

Contact your electrical utility to resolve the problem.

2. OTHER TYPES OF INTERFERENCE

If your equipment is not picking up the desired signals clearly enough, or if it is picking up unwanted signals, interference problems will appear.

■ Poor signal reception

(See pictures on the following page)

The problem of a weak signal appears when you are too far from the transmitter of the station you want to pick up or when there are obstacles between the antenna and the transmitter. The effect will be the same if the antenna is faulty or is not pointed in the right direction.

The television picture is much more likely to be affected than the sound. The sound will only be affected when the signals are extremely weak.



Normal picture



Weak signal

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Check and repair the antenna and the antenna lead wire.
- Install a higher or more directional (higher gain) antenna
- Install a signal booster.



For more information, refer to the brochure:
**CUTTING THROUGH...VARIOUS
SOLUTIONS TO INTERFERENCE.**

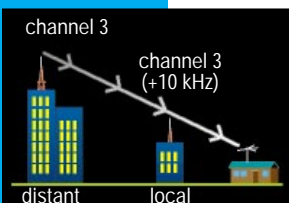
■ Interference caused by simultaneous reception of two television signals



Normal picture



Reception of two simultaneous signals



When the television receives two different signals at the same time, there may be interference.

The two pictures are different and are superimposed.

This type of interference can be caused by unusual atmospheric conditions that allow signals from a distant transmitter that uses the same channel to be picked up. In this case, you should wait for conditions to improve, because this is a short-lived phenomenon.

If this is a recurrent problem because of the location of your home, you should consider installing a directional antenna. The antenna will allow better reception of signals in the direction of the desired station.

Do not confuse this type of interference with so-called “ghost images.”

If there is a cable television system installed in the neighbourhood, your antenna may pick up signals from a leak in the cable system and cause interference. The presence of this type of interference can be checked by tuning in to a channel where there is usually no signal. If a signal is present, notify the cable operator.



Reception of two simultaneous signals



■ Ghost images



Normal picture



Ghost image

This interference occurs when the television signal is reflected by an obstacle, such as a building or mountain, or when the antenna or antenna lead wire is in poor condition. The pictures are then superimposed, because the main signal and the reflected signal do not arrive at the receiver at quite the same time. The reflecting obstacle can be located in any direction from the antenna. Simply rotating the



antenna may solve the problem. If reflected signals are coming from behind the television antenna, the ghost image could be reduced or eliminated by using a Yagi antenna or a rear-screen antenna. Poor installation of an antenna can also cause reflected ghost images.

In some cases, the phenomenon may persist regardless of the type of antenna used, because the obstacles are too large.

For more information, refer to the brochure:

**CUTTING THROUGH...VARIOUS
SOLUTIONS TO INTERFERENCE.**



■ Interference caused by a radio transmitter



Normal picture



Radio transmitter (channel 2 to 13)

When this type of interference appears on the screen, or when voices can be heard, the set is experiencing interference from GRS (better known as CB) transmissions, amateur radio transmissions or other radio transmissions from a transmitter located nearby. Interference appears when the radio operator is speaking.



Interference caused by a radio transmitter
(cable, channel 17 to 22)

This phenomenon generally affects VHF channels 2 to 13 and channels 17 to 22 if you are a cable subscriber. Check out your neighbourhood to identify the potential source of the interference, then contact the operator involved who will likely be willing to assist you in solving the problem.

High-pass filters or notch filters, may help to eliminate this interference.

For more information, refer to the brochure:
**CUTTING THROUGH...VARIOUS
SOLUTIONS TO INTERFERENCE.**



■ Audio rectification

Unwanted voices or sounds can be heard.

This interference affects television, radio, telephone or various other electronic instruments or devices in the home such as intercoms, organs or microphones.

Audio rectification is a common phenomenon in which an electronic circuit, usually an amplifier, is suddenly affected by unwanted external radio signals. If the equipment is surrounded by an intense radio signal, the wiring or one of the circuit components may act as an antenna and pick up an unwanted signal. This is not necessarily the result of a technical fault in the transmitter. The entry point of the unwanted signal must be located. This can be done by disconnecting all accessories to isolate the culprit. Proper filters and shielding can solve the problem.

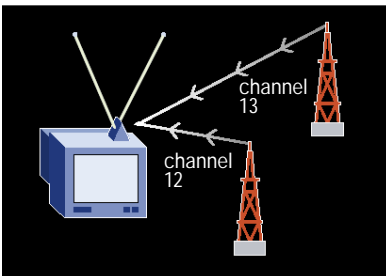
For more information on filters and shielding, refer to the brochure:
**CUTTING THROUGH...VARIOUS
SOLUTIONS TO INTERFERENCE.**



■ Interference from a neighbouring channel

(See picture on the following page)

The transmitter of a television station in your area can cause problems with the reception of more distant stations transmitting on adjacent channels. If, for example, you are receiving both a weak channel 13 signal and a very strong channel 12 signal, the sound of the latter is likely



to cause a grainy picture on channel 13. To check this, tune another television to channel 12, if possible, while observing the interference on channel 13 of the original television set. If you are experiencing this type of interference, there will be a correlation between the interference



Normal picture



Neighbouring channel

on channel 13 and the sound on channel 12. Repointing your antenna may eliminate this type of interference; if not, proper filters will be necessary. A higher-gain Yagi or rear-screen antenna may also prove effective.

Cable subscribers should not experience this type of problem since all television signals are maintained at similar levels.

■ Interference caused by an FM radio station



Normal picture



FM radio station

If an FM radio station transmitting antenna is located in the neighbourhood, interference may affect various electronic devices. Interference caused by an FM radio station often varies in accordance with the sound transmitted by the station. Unlike the interference caused by two-way radio transmitters that appears only when the radio operator speaks, this interference is continuous. This type of interference affects mainly channel 6 or VHF channels 2 to 13. In addition to the picture, sound on your set may also be affected.

To find the source, use a portable radio and adjust the tuner from one FM station to another to see if you can pinpoint the one transmitting the interfering signals that match the sounds affecting the television.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

- Repoint the antenna.
- Install a notch filter.
- If this is a new FM station in your area, contact the broadcaster, which will undoubtedly co-operate to help you solve the problem.

For more information, refer to the brochure:

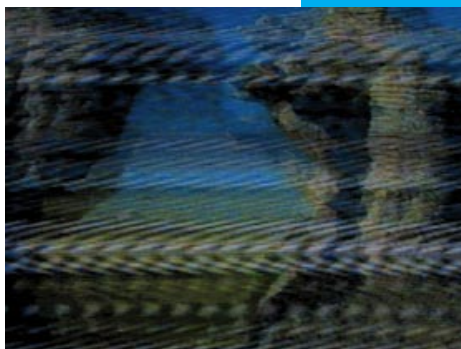
**CUTTING THROUGH...VARIOUS
SOLUTIONS TO INTERFERENCE.**



■ Industrial, scientific or medical (diathermic or heating) equipment



Normal picture



Industrial, scientific or medical (diathermic or heating) equipment

Interference can take several forms. For example, does your television have wavy lines across the screen that move from bottom to top? Some radio frequencies are used to produce heat in the food, plastics and wood industries and may cause this type of interference on channels 2 to 6. Diathermy is used in hospitals and medical clinics. Check whether this potential source of interference is located in the neighbourhood. To solve the problem, corrective measures must normally be applied to the device causing the interference. In some cases, installing a high-pass filter on the television set will reduce or eliminate the interference. Contact officials in the institution where the equipment in question is located.



For more information on choosing filters, refer to the brochure:
**CUTTING THROUGH...VARIOUS
 SOLUTIONS TO INTERFERENCE.**

■ Faulty signal booster

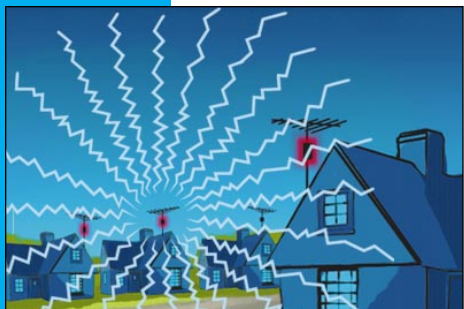


Normal picture



Faulty signal booster

Antennas equipped with faulty signal boosters can cause interference. A signal booster is a small, inexpensive device connected to the antenna, which boosts signals and helps improve reception quality.



When a signal booster is faulty, it can cause interference on television receivers in dozens of homes in the neighbourhood. The interference appears in various ways, mainly as more or less stable wavy lines or as horizontal bars. The screen may even go black for a few moments. This type of interference can take many forms.

A faulty signal booster can transmit unwanted signals that will vary in intensity and affect different television channels on receivers in the area, according to atmospheric conditions or the channels watched on the television to which it is connected.

SOLUTIONS

- Check the condition of your signal booster. Shut off power to the booster and connect your television directly to the antenna.
- If your booster is in good condition, you can find the faulty signal booster with the help of your neighbours by disconnecting the boosters in the area one at a time until the interference stops. If you have a directional antenna equipped with a rotor, you can determine the direction of the source of interference. (Note that some boosters are installed on the mast near the antenna.) The faulty signal booster will then have to be repaired or replaced.

NOTES

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CUTTING THROUGH... TELEVISION INTERFERENCE

Canada



The Psychology of Entertainment Media

Blurring the Lines
Between Entertainment
and Persuasion

Edited by
L. J. Shrum

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA

Blurring the Lines Between
Entertainment and Persuasion

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THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA

Blurring the Lines Between
Entertainment and Persuasion

Edited by

L. J. Shrum

University of Texas–San Antonio



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Cristel A. Russell is Assistant Professor of Marketing at San Diego State University. Her research focuses on the increasingly blurred lines between entertainment and marketing. Her work investigating the effectiveness of product placements in audiovisual media appears in the *Journal of Consumer Research* and she is currently working on several follow-up projects related to the product placement industry and consumers' responses to product placements. She also introduced the concept of television connectedness as an important factor

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Preface

One of the bedrock principles of a free-market system of commerce is the notion of a free flow of information to afford a level playing field for all decision makers. Within this framework operates what I will call, for lack of a more creative term, a variation of informed consent: Audience members consent to be persuaded as long as they are informed of the persuasion attempt. At least that's the way it's supposed to work for advertising: a paid, nonpersonal persuasive communication *from an identified source* (Sandage, Fryburger, & Rotzoll, 1983). In fact, that's often one of the reasons given for why advertising may not be all that effective (after all, people know they are being persuaded by a biased source and can appropriately source-discount). And it is likely the flip side of that reason as to why the notion of subliminal advertising is so feared and reviled by consumers—the notion that they could be persuaded without their knowledge and thus without their defense.

That is precisely what this book is about: how the lines between entertainment and persuasion have become increasingly blurred and how these blurred lines might either facilitate or inhibit changes in attitudes, beliefs and perceptions. The chapters that comprise this volume grew out of the 21st Annual Advertising and Consumer Psychology Conference, held at the Omni Berkshire Place in New York City, May 16–18, 2002, which was organized around the blurred lines theme. The best papers from this conference were invited for this volume. In addition, several additional chapters were invited from some of the best-known scholars in psychology, marketing, and communications who are doing work in this area. Taken together, this contributed volume represents a multidisciplinary investigation of an age-old process (persuasion) in a relatively new guise (e.g., product placements, brand films and television programs, sponsorships). Its intent is to explore how persuasion works in these contexts (and, indeed, to expand the notion of what constitutes persuasion), hopefully resulting in a more knowledgeable field and a more knowledgeable consumer.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Because this volume is closely associated with the annual Advertising and Consumer Psychology Conference, it is difficult to separate the contributions to the conference from the contribution to the book. I would like to acknowledge the

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L. J. Shrum
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What's So Special About Entertainment Media and Why Do We Need a Psychology for It?: An Introduction to the Psychology of Entertainment Media

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The title poses a reasonable question. Is there anything unique about entertainment media that warrants a different way of thinking about people's way of thinking? More to the point of the book, is there anything unique about entertainment media that might impact the extent to which the information it conveys has a persuasive effect? Certainly, if current theories of persuasion can just as easily (and accurately) account for effects that occur within entertainment media (e.g., TV programs, films) as they can for effects that occur between entertainment media (e.g., advertisements), Occam's razor would lop off the unneeded new theory devoted to entertainment media.

So what is the answer? To quote Ed Grimley, "It's difficult to say."¹ On the one hand, as Marcia Johnson points out in her forward to *Narrative Impact* (Green, Strange, & Brock, 2002), there are quite a lot of theoretical constructs that can account for certain effects of entertainment media (e.g., situation models, accessibility, source monitoring; Johnson, 2002). On the other hand, as Brock, Strange, and Green (2002) also note in that same volume, current dual processing theories of persuasion, which primarily address rhetorical persuasion, have trouble accounting for certain narrative persuasion effects. In fact, chapters in this book (cf. Chapters 8, 9) make the point that people typically process entertainment (narrative) and promotional (rhetorical) information differently. Consequently, it seems plausible, if not

¹ Ed Grimley was a character played by Martin Short on NBC's *Saturday Night Live*.

likely, that the ways in which entertainment and promotion have an effect on audiences are correspondingly different.

Nevertheless, this book is not equipped to answer the question of whether we need a psychology of entertainment media. Rather, it is intended to continue the scientific conversation about the nature of entertainment media and how they may impact the thoughts, feelings, perceptions, and behaviors of their audiences. Ideally, continued conversations on this matter would eventually lead to an answer.

This book is not the first to address the unique aspects of entertainment media. At least two other books come to mind. The first is Zillmann and Vorderer's (2000) *Media Entertainment: The Psychology of Its Appeal*, and the second is the aforementioned *Narrative Impact* (Green et al., 2002). Although each of these books has some overlap with this volume, there are important distinctions. The Zillmann and Vorderer book looks principally at what draws us to entertainment media and what it is about entertainment that holds our attention, scares us, and makes us happy. As such, it is primarily concerned with the gratifications that media entertainment provides. The Green et al. book addresses the impact of narratives, or the stories we encounter via books, plays, television, and so forth. As such, it is in the end concerned with issues of narrative effects. Each of these books nicely complements the present volume. The key distinction between those books and the present one is the focus of this book on the blurring between promotion and entertainment. Specifically, what this volume attempts to understand is how entertainment or narrative is information processed and whether this processing is fundamentally different from the processing of promotional or rhetorical information. If so, what are the consequences of these differences in processing on the persuasive impact of both the entertainment aspect and the promotional aspect?

ROADMAP FOR THE CHAPTERS

The chapters that comprise this book are divided into three broad areas. These areas are the potential effects of embedding promotions within entertainment media content, the persuasive power of the entertainment media content itself, and individual differences in the interplay between media usage and media effects.

Part I: Embedding Promotions Within Programs: Subliminal Embeds and Product Placements

Part I is predominantly focused on what is arguably the epitome of what at least I think of as blurred lines: product placement in entertainment media. Product placement generally refers to the deliberate inclusion of brands in stories, usually in television programs and films (but see Chapter 6 for an example of placements in prose). However, this section starts off with a chapter by Matthew Erdelyi and Diane Zizak on subliminal perception and persuasion (Chapter 2). Although embedding subliminal stimuli in ads is not a direct example of blurring the lines (both

the subliminal and supraliminal stimuli are persuasive attempts), it is a perfect starting point for discussing the psychological processes that may underlie product placement effects. Erdelyi and Zizak provide a comprehensive review of the current status of subliminal processes in experimental psychology, discuss a number of laboratory studies that pertain to these processes, and then illustrate how common real-world phenomena such as jokes, art, and ads can be integrated within this framework. They provide a relatively new take (at least to consumer psychology) on what is considered subliminal and argue that contemporary experimental psychology has focused almost exclusively on degrading stimuli (to make them subliminal) through the use of gizmos—technological devices such as tachistoscopes—at the expense of what Erdelyi and Zizak term *psychological techniques* for degrading the stimulus. In doing so, they extend previous work on the surprisingly close association between cognitive theories of information processing and Freudian concepts such as repression, suppression, reconstruction, and defense, just to name a few (Erdelyi, 1985, 1996).

The remainder of Part I (Chapters 3–7) is devoted to issues regarding product placement. These five chapters are for the most part ordered from the more general to the more specific. In Chapter 3, John McCarty reviews the current state of product placements in film and television. He provides a general overview of the construct, discusses a number of prominent examples of the practice (some likely to be familiar to readers, some not), and reviews academic research on product placement. He then builds on that analysis to delineate some promising areas of inquiry that might help to spur future research on the topic. These areas include issues of salience, involvement, and product characteristics.

In Chapter 4, Sharmistha Law and Kathryn Braun-LaTour address one of the most perplexing issues in product placement research: how to measure the impact of placements. As Law and Braun-LaTour note (and as echoed in Chapters 3, 5, and 7), research on the effects of product placement has been decidedly mixed, even though industry touts numerous success stories, albeit mostly anecdotally. One reason they suggest for the mixed findings from previous research is an overreliance on recall and recognition as the key dependent measures. The authors note that the use of these measures imply (or at least should imply) a process that is for the most part conscious. However, drawing on recent research on learning without awareness, Law and Braun-LaTour suggest that making a distinction between explicit (conscious) and implicit (unconscious) memory (Graf & Schacter, 1985) might be a useful approach to studying product placement effects. They offer a theoretical framework based on this distinction and discuss some of the findings of their own research to bolster their arguments.

In Chapter 5, Moonhee Yang, Beverly Roskos-Ewoldsen, and David Roskos-Ewoldsen also address issues of product placement and memory. However, they take a slightly different approach from Law and Braun-LaTour in that they focus as much, if not more, on earlier stages in information processing, in particular the comprehension stage. They argue that understanding what happens at the time

of viewing is essential to being able to accurately predict product placement effects. Building on the general notion of mental or situation models (Wyer, 2003; Wyer & Radvansky, 1999), they specifically use a landscape model framework (van den Broek, Risdén, Fletcher, & Thurlow, 1996) to make predictions regarding the conditions under which product placement effects might be expected. They then present data from an experiment that tested some key assumptions of that model. They conclude by discussing the implications of these findings for product placement effects.

Namita Bhatnagar, Lernas Aksoy, and Selin Malkoc provide their take on product placement issues in Chapter 6. In particular, they focus on contextual factors, such as the fit between the program and the placed brand, the strength of the placement (i.e., number of brand mentions, foreground vs. background), consumer characteristics (e.g., awareness of placement, involvement), and characteristics of the medium (e.g., trustworthiness). They also provide something missing from all of the other chapters: an example of product placement in a novel. They discuss the reactions to such placements from readers (mostly negative) and draw implications regarding process from the differences in the contextual issues between novels and TV programs or film.

Finally, Susan Auty and Charlie Lewis (Chapter 7) conclude Part I by addressing a relatively underresearched product placement effect: the effects of placements on children. Auty and Lewis begin by briefly reporting the results of an experiment they conducted and then using those results to theorize on issues of explicit and implicit memory, mere exposure effects, and the relation of these constructs to choice behavior. Their approach differs slightly from the other product placement chapters, however, in that it focuses almost exclusively on effects on children. This is an important addition to the literature because most product placement research has been conducted with adults. Although the processes underlying product placement effects are not likely to differ as a function of age, the effects may differ because of cognitive development. Indeed, as Auty and Lewis note, the blurred lines between entertainment and promotion/persuasion may be even more blurry for children, who may lack sufficient sophistication to discern whether a plot scene involves product placement, assuming they even know what product placement is. Auty and Lewis's results suggest that product placements can indeed directly influence choice behavior in children, even in the absence of effects on memory. Moreover, issues of memory differ as a function of age.

Part II: The Programs Between the Ads: The Persuasive Power of Entertainment Fiction and Narrative

Part II steps away from attempts to persuade via promotion to persuasion effects of the media entertainment content itself. The first two chapters of Part II focus on general issues involving the interplay between visual and verbal information and the persuasive power of fiction, both part and parcel of what television and film entertainment provide. In Chapter 8, Bob Wyer and Rashmi Adaval address

how verbal and nonverbal (visual) information may interact in their influence on memory and judgment. They make a persuasive argument that visual images can have a substantial effect on how people process subsequent information they receive. This of course is the case when the visual information is relevant to the subsequent judgments, but the authors also argue that this effect holds even when the visual information has little to do with the subsequent information or judgments. They bolster their arguments by reinterpreting some of their prior work, as well as discussing new data, and discussing the implications of these findings for how entertainment media may affect the attitudes and behaviors of audience members.

In Chapter 9, Melanie Green, Jennifer Garst, and Tim Brock address the power of fiction in general, including nonvisual (e.g., novels) as well as visual narratives. They begin by identifying some of the fundamental differences between fiction and nonfiction, particularly in terms of how they are processed, and relate these differences in processing to issues of memory and judgment. They suggest that, contrary to conventional wisdom, research is accumulating suggesting that fiction may actually be more persuasive than nonfiction. They then go on to detail aspects of fiction that may contribute to this superior persuasiveness as well as boundary conditions for this effect.

The next three chapters shift the focus to the effects of television consumption on values, attitudes, and behaviors. In Chapter 10, L. J. Shrum, Jim Burroughs, and Aric Rindfleisch discuss theory and research on the cultivation effect (Gerbner & Gross, 1976). The cultivation effect pertains to the positive relation between television consumption and the holding of beliefs and behaviors congruent with the television message. Shrum et al. specifically focus on the processes that may underlie this relation. They detail a model of how television information influences judgments of set size and probability and then draw on recently collected data to extend this model to the development of judgments such as personal values (in this case, materialism). They suggest that the way in which television information influences judgments is a function of the types of judgments that are made and how they are constructed and that television influences the different judgments in quite different ways.

In Chapter 11, George Comstock looks at a specific type of television effect, the controversial relation between violent television viewing and aggression. Comstock, however, does a number of things that are different from previous discussions on this topic. First, he discusses a number of meta-analyses, including his own work, that clearly show a positive correlation between exposure to violent television or movies and aggression or antisocial behavior. However, as he notes, the real issue is interpreting that positive correlation: Does it reflect a causal effect of television or some other causal mechanism? Comstock suggests that the case for television viewing being the causal factor is quite strong. He points to meta-analyses of experiments that show a very consistent (and very robust) effect on aggressive behavior. Even though certain individual studies may be critiqued for such things as construct validity and generalizability, the consistency of the pattern argues that television is the causal factor, particularly when coupled with

the equally consistent (though less robust in terms of effect size) survey (correlational) findings. Finally, Comstock makes one additional contribution. He suggests that, based on a reexamination of the data, dispositions such as attitudes, norms, and values are not a necessary link between exposure to television violence and aggression. Although the link has been found in a number of studies, it is also the case that direct relations between exposure to television violence and aggression have been observed. He then discusses the implications of this reformulation for the processes underlying media effects on aggressive behavior.

Although the effects of media violence on viewers is probably the best known media effect, there are in fact other effects of viewing television content. As Maria Kniazeva notes in Chapter 12, television programs convey a significant amount of information about consumption behavior. This information can serve as specific cues about what is considered normative, desirable, to be avoided, and so forth. The information may be relatively brand specific or it could be relevant to a general product category. Moreover, Kniazeva argues that, with respect to television effects, the academic literature (at least in marketing) has tended to focus almost entirely on the effects of advertisements, ignoring for the most part the effects of the programs between the ads. In her chapter, Kniazeva outlines the extant literature on non-advertising media effects and discusses the psychological processes that occur at various stages of processing (i.e., encoding, interpretation, retrieval). In doing so, she adds to the growing body of work on the processes underlying media effects.

The previous few chapters have focused on the effects of viewing particular content. In Chapter 13, David Schumann looks at the ironic flipside of not viewing or, at least, not viewing particular types of programs. Schumann explores the ramifications of market segmentation, particularly in regard to how it restricts exposure to diversity. Building on earlier work by Joseph Turow (1997), he develops a complex model of restricting exposure to diversity and, in doing so, provides a blueprint for an extended program of research into what until now has been a relatively ignored topic. He particularly notes that in targeting a consumer segment by pointing out the shared consumption activities of that segment, there is also an underlying inference that the group is different from other segments. Indeed, it is often in the marketer's interest to reinforce not only affiliation or aspiration groups and their favored brands and practices but also avoidance groups and what not to have and do (Lowrey, Englis, Shavitt, & Solomon, 2001). Schumann's model explores the antecedents and consequences of this practice.

Part III: Individual Differences in Media Usage and Their Role as Mediators and Moderators of Media Effects

Several of the previous chapters in Part II mention in some way that particular media effects are likely to vary as a function of at least some type of individual characteristic. The chapters that comprise Part III of this volume focus specifically on several of these individual differences. In Chapter 14, Tim Brock and Stephen

Livingston assert that one of these individual differences is the need for entertainment. They suggest that some people simply crave entertainment more than others. If so, then it seems possible that need for entertainment may moderate the effects of consuming such entertainment by determining how media are processed. As a first step in testing this proposition, Brock and Livingston present data on the development of their Need for Entertainment scale, detailing their efforts to develop and validate the scale items.

Cristel Russell, Andy Norman, and Susan Heckler take a similar approach in Chapter 15. However, rather than looking at individual relations with entertainment in general, Russell et al. explore the extent to which viewers may become connected with particular programs or characters. Specifically, they explore the extent to which individuals differ in such connectedness. They discuss their program of research that includes the development of a connectedness scale and the articulation of the antecedents and consequences of connectedness. They further assert that connectedness may serve as a mediator or moderator of television program effects.

In Chapter 16, Dara Greenwood and Paula Pietromonaco tackle the question of whether frequent viewing of idealized images of women in the media results in greater body dissatisfaction on the part of viewers, especially women. This is a particularly troubling issue because of the relation between body dissatisfaction and the development of eating disorders, such as bulimia. Greenwood and Pietromonaco follow a path very similar to that of Russell et al. Specifically, they suggest that some types of women may be more influenced by media images than others and thus may be more likely to develop eating disorders. They suggest that women's relational styles may moderate the extent to which the media images have an effect on those women. They discuss data from their research program that suggests an interaction among attachment styles, media perceptions, and body image concerns. They also discuss the ambiguous lines between fantasy and reality that are the subject of this volume and suggest that these blurred lines may indeed lead young women to manifest their attachment needs through body image concerns.

The last two chapters of Part III address a specific type of media entertainment, sports entertainment. In Chapter 17, Scott Jones, Colleen Bee, Rick Burton, and Lynn Kahle discuss the factors that make sports entertainment a unique medium for marketing communications. They look at the relationships that fans develop with sports teams and the consequences that may result from these relationships, including compliance, identification, and internalization. They then discuss some strategic implications of these relationships that might be of interest to marketers.

In Chapter 18, Steve McDaniel concludes the individual differences focus by looking at the relation between sensation seeking and the consumption of TV sports. McDaniel reviews research that has looked at the relation between sensation seeking and television viewing in general and then goes on to focus specifically

on recent research on televised sports. He details some of his own work that shows that sensation seeking is indeed related to such things as viewing violent combative sports (indeed, for both women and men).

ENTERTAINMENT MEDIA *IS* SPECIAL

As noted earlier, this book is not equipped to answer at least the second part of the question posed in the title of this chapter, namely, whether we need a separate psychology of entertainment media. However, this book does address the first part: What is so special about entertainment media? All of the chapters in this book provide a perspective on the nature of entertainment media and how it often blends with overt persuasion attempts, such as promotions. And virtually all in some manner speak to the issue of how entertainment media is processed, with the conclusion that media consumers do in fact tend to process entertainment (narrative) and promotional (rhetorical) information differently. This, if nothing else, is what makes entertainment media so special. And it is the premise of at least some of the chapters that this is also what makes it potentially so powerful. It should come as no surprise, then, that marketers would be interested in becoming part of that special processing rather than separate from it.

Perhaps that is fine. This book does not take a position as to whether the blurring of the lines between entertainment and promotion is necessarily good or bad. But in the interest of the free flow of information mentioned in the preface, it is hoped that the chapters in this book can at least contribute to more informed consumers who might then decide whether to provide their consent to be persuaded.

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**I. EMBEDDING PROMOTIONS WITHIN
PROGRAMS: SUBLIMINAL EMBEDS AND
PRODUCT PLACEMENTS**

Beyond Gizmo Subliminality

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For most of its history, laboratory psychology has probed subliminal perception with gizmos—physical devices such as tachistoscopes—for degrading stimuli to liminal levels. The results have been grudging and often controversial. The real psychological action, it is suggested in this chapter, is found in psychological techniques for degrading the stimulus, among them, *Ebbinghausian subliminality* (in which forgetting degrades the stimulus), *Pavlovian subliminality* (in which the information is induced associatively), and *Freudian subliminality* (in which latent contents are transformed into mitigated manifest contents by dream-work techniques, such as censorship, displacement, condensation, symbolism, and plastic-word representation). Even when gizmos are used to produce subliminal effects, unacknowledged psychological subliminality is likely to play a role in the effects. In this chapter, we first review the status of subliminal processes in experimental psychology, examine some examples from laboratory studies, and then define and illustrate some of the psychological techniques ubiquitously found in the real world (e.g., in jokes, art, ads) for degrading or subliminalizing stimuli.

GIZMO SUBLIMINALITY

If one reads the methods section of any mainstream experimental article on subliminal perception, one is bound to be treated to an assortment of details about the gizmos—the physical devices and techniques—employed for rendering the

stimulus subliminal. The tachistoscope used might be described along with the exposure durations (e.g., 10 ms, 1 ms). The type of masking—pattern masking, energy masking, metacontrast—will be detailed (if masking is used), with specification of the SOA (stimulus onset asynchrony). One is likely also to learn about the luminances involved, the visual angles, the distance of the subject from the display, and so on.

This tradition of degrading the input with physical devices goes back a century. For example, Otto Pötzl (1917), who did one of the first modern subliminal studies, used a camera shutter for getting stimulus exposures down to 0.01 s (10 ms) and succeeded in reproducing certain peculiar effects that he had observed with neurological patients who had sustained damage to the visual cortex (e.g., the emergence and recovery—in distorted form—of undetected central stimuli in subsequent peripheral percepts and, even, in the content of dreams of the same night). In the 1950s, two-channel and three-channel tachistoscopes became modal, though homespun devices were also occasionally deployed (e.g., carbon paper—multiple carbon copies of some text were made, and the carbon copy that was sufficiently blurred to be judged below the limen of consciousness designated the subliminal stimulus).

Today, of course, we have computers and the accent falls on pixels, refresh times, rise and fall characteristics of the light source, the SOAs employed, and so on. It all strikes one as highly scientific, with gizmos having the aura of science about them. But are gizmos necessary, or even relevant? In this article, we advance the view that gizmos, which started out as useful adjuncts to research as helpful laboratory tools, have usurped the leading role in research on subliminal processes and have distorted and even undermined some of the powerful effects involved. The classic phenomena of unconscious mentation that were introduced into psychology by Freud, Janet, Jung, and even von Helmholtz (of unconscious inference fame), among others, were never about stimulus flashes or otherwise degraded physical stimuli but entailed, instead, psychological processes that were inaccessible to consciousness or which had been rendered unconscious by psychological techniques. It is these psychological techniques for degrading consciousness—which we refer to as *psychological subliminality* in contraposition to gizmo subliminality—that we seek to define and underscore in this chapter.

Pötzl-Fisher Effects

Before we move beyond gizmo subliminality, however, let us examine one striking example of effects produced with a gizmo—a tachistoscope in this case—by the laboratory-minded psychoanalyst Charles Fisher, who translated Pötzl's earlier monograph into English and sought to replicate Pötzl's findings and extend them from dreams to other soft indicators, such as daydreams, fantasy, free-associations, and doodles (Fisher, 1954, 1956, 1988).

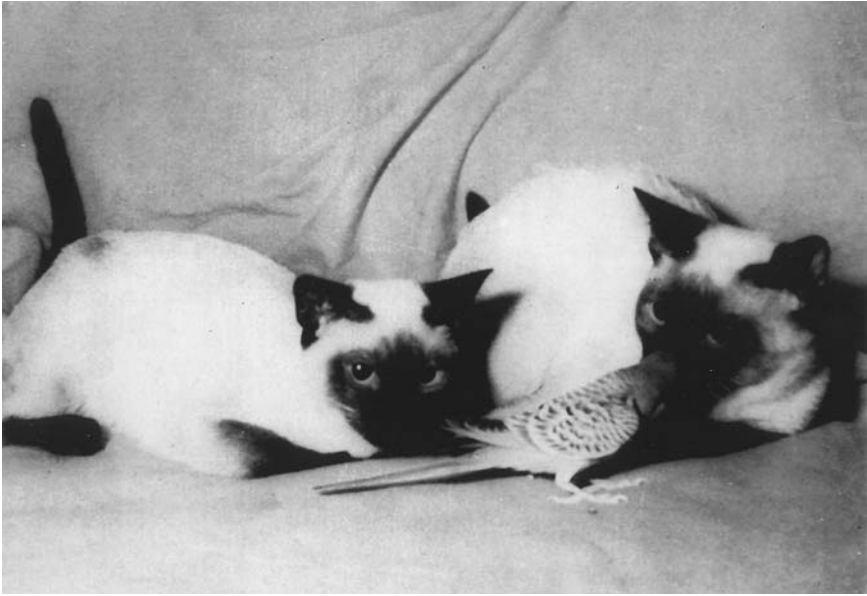


FIG. 2.1 Fisher's 1956 stimulus: Two Siamese cats and a parakeet. From "Dreams, Images, and Perception: A Study of Unconscious-Preconscious Relationships," by C. Fisher, 1956, *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 4, p. 24. Copyright 1956 "By permission of Leo Goldberger, Ph.D., Editor-in-chief of *Psychoanalysis & Contemporary Thought*." Reprinted with permission.

In a 1956 study, Fisher flashed the stimulus shown in Fig. 2.1 (a parakeet perched between two Siamese cats) for 10 ms. Although none of the subjects reported seeing a bird, there was much evidence of the bird having been registered below full awareness. One subject, for example, reported seeing "two white and black animals which resembled dogs or pigs" (Fisher, 1956, p. 22), which she proceeded to render in a drawing (see Fig. 2.2). Despite the absence of any verbal report about a bird, the drawing does seem to reflect the influence of the bird. The same subject produced drawings of word associations to stimuli provided by the experimenter. To the stimulus word *DOG*, the subject produced the association *HOUSE*, along with the more detailed image of a watchdog standing in front of a house. Her attempt to render this associated image is reproduced in Fig. 2.3. This time the subject herself noted the bird, expressing confusion over its emergence: "She wanted to know what was wrong, could not understand why she continued to draw a bird, stating that she knew very well how to draw a dog and had done so many times (Fisher, 1956, pp. 25–26). If advertisers could get this type of compulsive behavior without awareness of its cause, it would be quite a feat indeed.



FIG. 2.2 Subject's drawing of "two white and black animals which resemble dogs or pigs." From "Dreams, Images, and Perception: A Study of Unconscious-Preconscious Relationships," by C. Fisher, 1956, *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 4, p. 23. Copyright 1956 "By permission of Leo Goldberger, Ph.D., Editor-in-chief of *Psychoanalysis & Contemporary Thought*." Reprinted with permission.

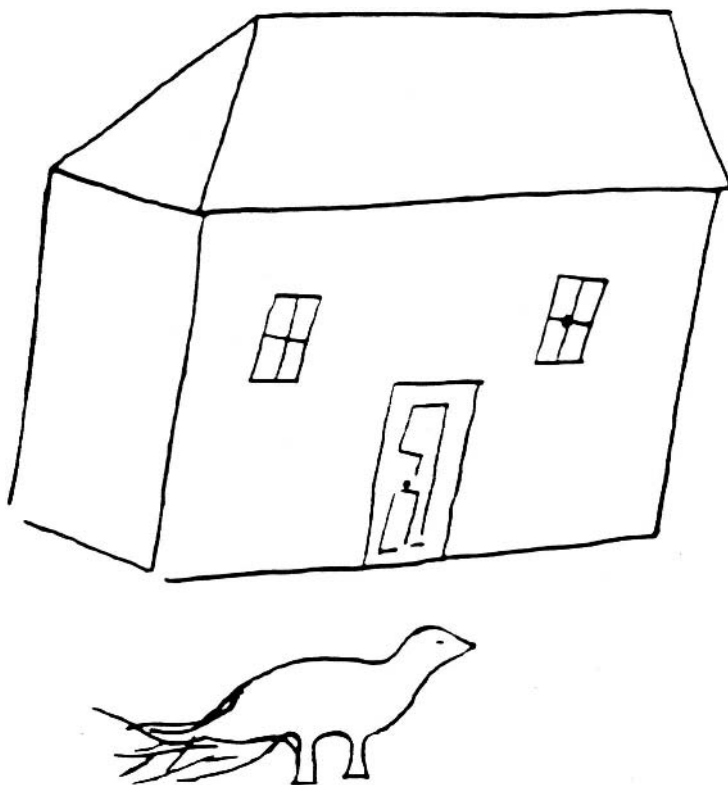


FIG. 2.3 Watchdog standing in front of a house. From "Dreams, Images, and Perception: A Study of Unconscious-Preconscious Relationships," by C. Fisher, 1956, *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 4, p. 25. Copyright 1956 "By permission of Leo Goldberger, Ph.D., Editor-in-chief of *Psychoanalysis & Contemporary Thought*." Reprinted with permission.

Another subject, who also failed to report seeing a bird in the stimulus flash, responded with the word *FEATHER* to the stimulus word *PILLOW* and produced the drawing reproduced in the top drawing of Fig. 2.4. A bird (or possibly two birds) can be seen in the drawing, along with the outline (to the right) of a cat with its mouth by the head of the top bird. The same subject, when presented the stimulus word *SICK*, responded with the word association *PATIENT* and drew the picture of a sick child in bed (Fig. 2.4, middle drawing). The shape of birds emerges in the folds of the blanket covering the child. This same subject was reexposed to the original stimulus, this time for 0.1 s (100 ms), but still failed to report seeing a bird in the stimulus. Yet her drawing of a cat lapping up some spilled milk (Fig. 2.4, bottom drawing) again shows the “compulsive emergence” (Fisher, 1956, p. 22) of birds. Even at a full 1-s exposure, this subject failed to report seeing the bird.

The Current Status of Subliminal Effects in Experimental Psychology

Fisher’s demonstrations were decidedly on the informal side, and a generation ago experimental psychologists would have reacted to these data with a torrent of methodological criticisms. At that time, the smart money was aligned against the reality of subliminal effects. In more recent years, however, there has been a veritable sea change in the mainstream, and these types of effects, in a variety of guises, are readily accepted and produced in the laboratory (e.g., Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Bornstein & Pittman, 1992; Erdelyi, 1970, 1996). The change in the *Zeitgeist* from extreme skepticism to everyday acceptance has not yet been fully harmonized in the scientific literature. This may be seen in a special issue of *Psychology and Marketing* (Moore, 1988), devoted to subliminal advertising, in which the contributing experts simultaneously question the effectiveness of (gizmo) subliminal advertising while underscoring the reality of subliminal perception effects in the laboratory.

In recent times, the focus in the experimental psychology of subliminal processes has been shifting from the methodological to the conceptual. A wide band of subliminal effects, including those of the Pötzl-Fisher variety, can be reliably produced with rigorous methodology. But what do we mean by “subliminal” in these cases? For example, if the subject fails to report a stimulus (e.g., bird), does this mean that the subject has no awareness of the stimulus? Is awareness an either-or state? Is there, in other words, a true threshold or limen such that a stimulus intensity below this limen fails to produce awareness but at or above this limen yields awareness? Almost all contemporary experimental psychologists would now espouse the position that there is no true limen except as a statistical abstraction. As the stimulus is gradually intensified, the probability of its perception increases gradually (in an ogival fashion). There is no step-function cleaving perception into two distinct states, detect and nondetect. Thus, if we hew to the classic threshold or limen concept, we must adopt a statistical conception (e.g., the threshold/limen is the stimulus value at which the probability of detection reaches,



say, 50%). By this (unavoidable) statistical conception, subliminal perception becomes real by definition because 50% of the stimuli at or below the limen are detected. In effect, then, we are left with a more-or-less conception of awareness: The limen defines a region of relative obscuration of awareness.

Modern psychophysicists have by and large opted for cutting the Gordian knot and have outrightly abandoned the concept of the limen (what happens to subliminal if there is no limen?) and have shifted to variations of signal detection theory (e.g., Macmillan & Creelman, 1991; Swets, 1964; Swets, Tanner, & Birdsall, 1961), in which perceptual sensitivity is evaluated by means of the receiver operating characteristic (ROC) curve, which plots hit rates (the probability of the subject saying “yes” when the stimulus is presented) as a function of false-alarm rates (the probability of saying “yes” when nothing, or a nonstimulus distractor, is presented). A metric, d' , or some homologue, is used to measure sensitivity, with $d' = 0$ defining a complete absence of sensitivity to the stimulus. A low value of sensitivity (e.g., $d' = 1$) can be arbitrarily defined as the limen (Holender, 1986; Macmillan, 1986), which would again cinch the reality of subliminal perception by definition because any $d' > 0$ means greater than null sensitivity. Although Fisher’s work preceded the wide-scale application of signal detection theory to subliminal perception, it is a safe bet that his gizmo-induced subliminality (the subject failing to report “bird”) did not reflect zero sensitivity ($d' = 0$) to the unreported stimulus item but only a low level of sensitivity (see Erdelyi, 1970, 1996).

PSYCHOLOGICAL SUBLIMINALITY

Note that the terms of the argument have shifted from gizmos to perception. We now are concerned with the subject’s performance—50% detection, $d' = 1$ —rather than with the particulars of the physical device for calibrating the limen. Subliminality is defined not by the gizmo settings but by how the subject performs; it is a response-defined subliminality not a gizmo-defined subliminality. Because there are many psychological ways of degrading performance, it should be clear that we are not wedded to gizmo techniques of degradation. Indeed, for reasons to be noted later, gizmos may not always be the sensible conduit to subliminality and may, actually, derail some of the most vital subliminal phenomena.

←

FIG. 2.4 (*facing page*) Top drawing: pillow with feathers spilling out at the right end. Middle drawing: patient in bed. Bottom drawing: subject’s drawing of the stimulus represented at 0.1 s (cat lapping up spilled milk). From “Dreams, Images, and Perception: A Study of Unconscious-Preconscious Relationships,” by C. Fisher, 1956, *Journal of the American Psychoanalytic Association*, 4, pp. 22, 29, 30. Copyright 1956 “By permission of Leo Goldberger, Ph.D., Editor-in-chief of *Psychoanalysis & Contemporary Thought*.” Reprinted with permission.

We have no preset number of psychological techniques of degradation. There are many. Rather than strive for exhaustiveness, we focus instead on three well-known techniques—or classes of techniques—which can be applied to the willful manipulation of levels of consciousness.

Ebbinghausian Subliminality

Although the designation is new, Ebbinghausian subliminality goes back to the beginning of experimental psychology. Ebbinghaus (1885), who served as his own subject, showed that just-learned materials that are ignored by the subject are rapidly forgotten over time. A plot of Ebbinghaus's data (Fig. 2.5) yields the widely known Ebbinghaus curve of forgetting. Because, as we have shown, there is no unique unarbitrary criterion for subliminality, a region of sufficient obscurity will do, which forgetting can produce. Hence, we have subliminality due to forgetting.

But why designate the forgotten subliminal? Maybe the forgotten material is not subliminal but gone, as is implied by the usual rendering of the Ebbinghaus (1885) outcome as “memory decays with time.” There is a straightforward answer: The

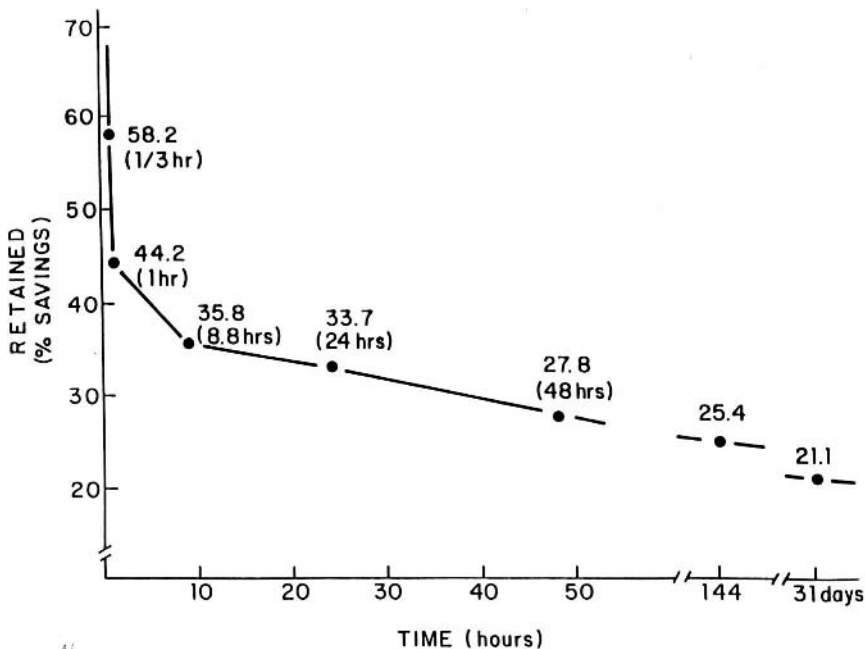


FIG. 2.5 The Ebbinghaus curve of forgetting. From *The Recovery of Unconscious Memories: Hypermnnesia & Reminiscence* (p. 2), by M. H. Erdelyi, 1996, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press. © 1996 The University of Chicago Press. Reprinted with permission.

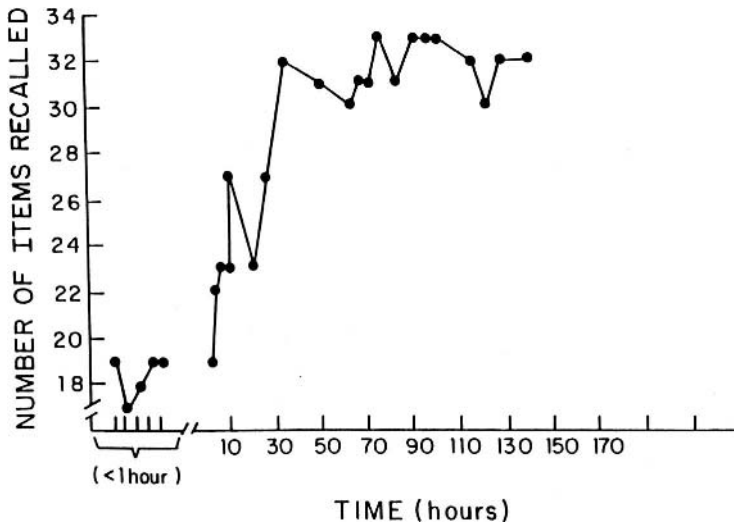


FIG. 2.6 Erdelyi and Kleinbard's (1978) retention function: Picture recall increases with time (hypermnnesia). From "Has Ebbinghaus Decayed With Time? The Growth of Recall (Hypermnnesia) Over Days," by M. H. Erdelyi and J. Kleinbard, 1978, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Learning and Memory*, 4, p. 278. Copyright 1978 by The American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission.

forgotten, or at least some of it, may not be gone but may have merely gone underground, below the "threshold of consciousness," as Johann Herbart (1824–1825) suggested decades before Ebbinghaus (see Boring, 1950; Sand, 1988). Fig. 2.6 presents another memory function, introduced in the experimental literature by Erdelyi and Kleinbard (1978). When, instead of avoiding the memories, as had Ebbinghaus, the subject actively thinks of them and seeks to retrieve more of the material, conscious accessibility progressively increases (*hypermnnesia*) rather than decreases (*amnnesia*).

An important difference between the Ebbinghaus (1885) and the Erdelyi and Kleinbard (1978) studies, other than the ignoring versus thinking of the materials, is the type of stimulus used: nonsense syllables in the case of Ebbinghaus and pictures in the case of Erdelyi and Kleinbard. The stimulus turns out to be a critical factor, as suggested by Fig. 2.7 (also from Erdelyi & Kleinbard, 1978): When recall is repeatedly tested for a list of pictures, memory goes up with time (hypermnnesia); the same multiple testing for words, however, fails to produce a reliable increment over time. In a review of the literature, David Payne (1987) found that virtually all multitrial recall studies with pictures produced hypermnnesia, but less than 50% of them did so with lists of words. Experimental psychology, unfortunately, has had a predilection for oversimple stimuli (nonsense syllables, lists of words) and for this reason has lost sight of upward-trending memory, which

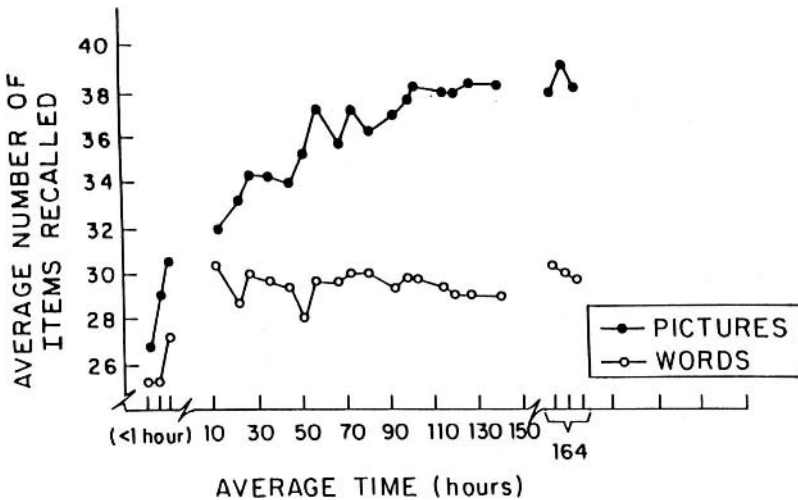


FIG. 2.7 Erdelyi and Kleinbard's (1978) retention functions for pictures and words. From "Has Ebbinghaus Decayed With Time? The Growth of Recall (Hypermnesia) Over Days," by M. H. Erdelyi and J. Kleinbard, 1978, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Human Learning and Memory*, 4, p. 282. Copyright 1978 by The American Psychological Association. Reprinted with permission.

had already been experimentally documented by Ballard in 1913 (see Erdelyi, 1996, for an extensive review). The stimulus needs not be, it turns out, pictures. Poetry, engaging narratives, Socratic stimuli (which subjects themselves generate from answering riddles) will do. Thus, through retrieval effort or retrieval neglect, accessibility of memories to awareness can be significantly modulated both upward and downward.

It should be noted that traditional gizmo subliminality, such as produced by tachistoscopes, is entwined in these memory effects because testing for perception necessarily takes place some time after the stimulus (even if only fractions of a second later), so amnesia and hypermnesia alter the effects of the gizmo. Strictly speaking, we can never measure subliminal perception because by the time we get to measuring it, we are already consigned to measuring memory. This conundrum has been noted before (e.g., Holender, 1986; James, 1890/1950) but tends, perhaps because it is inconvenient, to be forgotten in mainstream literature.

Pavlovian Subliminality

We now briefly consider the associative induction of meanings, a technique ubiquitous in the advertising world—and the animal lab—but which so far has not been conceptualized as a subliminal technique in psychology. Ivan Petrovitch Pavlov (1927) is of course credited with the systematic laboratory study of this type of

conditioning. Pavlovian (classical) conditioning involves, as is universally known in psychology, the association of a *conditioned stimulus* (CS) with an *unconditioned stimulus* (US), which is defined as any stimulus that at the beginning of the experimental session reliably produces a particular response, designated the *unconditioned response* (UR). Thus, the US may be meat powder placed on the tongue of a hungry dog, and the UR is the salivation that ensues. The CS is an initially neutral stimulus, that is, one that does not produce anything like the UR. Thus, the CS could be a tone or bell but not, for example, cheese (because cheese is likely to produce salivation before any conditioning has taken place). The paradigm can be schematized as follows:

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{US}_{\text{meat}} & \longrightarrow & \text{UR}_{\text{salivation}} \\ | & & \\ \text{CS}_{\text{bell}} & \longrightarrow & - \end{array}$$

After a number of pairings, classical conditioning may occur; that is, the initially neutral CS now elicits a response (usually) similar to the UR. This learned response to the CS is designated the *conditioned response*, or *CR*. Thus, whereas at the outset the CS was neutral, after conditioning has taken hold, it produces the CR:

$$\text{CS}_{\text{bell}} \longrightarrow \text{CR}_{\text{salivation}}$$

Now, in the advertising world this is a standard technique, though meat and bells are not the usual stimuli used. Instead, some exciting stimulus (e.g., a sexy model) is used as the US (which produces something like salivation in the subject) and is paired with the product (e.g., a car):

$$\begin{array}{ccc} \text{US}_{\text{babe/hunk}} & \longrightarrow & \text{UR}_{\text{salivation}} \\ | & & \\ \text{CS}_{\text{car}} & \longrightarrow & - \end{array}$$

After a number of pairings the subject might be expected to respond viscerally to the initially neutral product, for example:

$$\text{CS}_{\text{car}} \longrightarrow \text{CR}_{\text{salivation}}$$

The traditional view of classical conditioning was a mechanical one. The CS somehow became a substitute for the US. Modern approaches (e.g., Rescorla, 1988) take a more cognitive tack and suggest (based on much research) that the CS is treated by the subject (dog, rat, or human) informationally, as a predictor of the US. Thus, after conditioning has taken hold, the initially neutral CS becomes predictive of the US. We might say the CS comes to imply the US ($\text{CS} \Rightarrow \text{US}$) and then leads to the appropriate preparatory behaviors, the CR.

The human subject may sometimes be aware of the implied message in a Pavlovian ad (this car implies the sexy babe/hunk and the exciting possibilities to follow), but most of the time the veiled communication remains in the background. Indeed, if the message-by-association were too explicit—"get this car and sexy things will happen"—the subject might critically reject the message. As we note later, too much consciousness triggers critical or defensive evaluations of the message and may well lead to its rejection. As long as the implied message ("this car will get you sex with beautiful babes/hunks") is only implied and in the background, the conditioning takes place without conscious criticism overriding the message, and the subject may well wind up behaving the way the advertiser hoped (buying the car because, without being quite conscious why, the car is sexy, and so on).

The technique of *product placement* (aka "embedded advertising") may be thought of as a more veiled version of Pavlovian subliminality. When the juxtapositions occur in what is clearly an advertisement, the subject is more likely to be aware of the implied message and reject it ("What do you take me for? Do you think I am so stupid?"). If, however, the product is associated with the powerful US in the seamless context of a narrative or movie, the classical conditioning is more likely to occur without the subject being aware of the trick and is less likely to reject the message.

It should be noted that Ebbinghausian subliminality will further degrade awareness of the associative communication. If interrogated immediately after the US-CS juxtapositions, the subject may report awareness of the contingencies. Sometime later—the advertiser might hope—this weak explicit awareness may wane, leaving, as with the bird-besotted subjects of Fisher, an inexplicable but powerful response tendency ("I know *Consumer Reports* criticized this car, but I really like it; it's sexy, and it makes me feel good. I don't know why, but I want it. I have to have it."). Thus, different techniques for inducing subliminality can overlap and interact.

Freudian Sublimality

We began our discussion of subliminal processes by shifting the accent from the gizmos that produce subliminal perception to the perceptual performance itself. We now take a further step by shifting our emphasis from mere perception—sight—to insight. Instead of raw perception (e.g., "Do you see the point of light?"), our concern becomes the reception of meaning (e.g., "Do you see my point?"). This type of distinction is, perhaps, the most elemental feature of psychoanalysis and is rendered by Freud as the difference between *manifest content* (surface semantic structure; text) and *latent content* (deep, often unconscious semantic structure; subtext). Of course, poets and artists in general have always known this type of distinction. Freud's contribution was to force the obvious—psychological depth—on an inchoate and, later, recalcitrant psychology (e.g., behaviorism).

TABLE 2.1
Dream-Work Techniques (Techniques of Freudian
Subliminality)

I. Censorship
(a) Omission
(b) Hints, modification, allusions
(c) Displacement of accent
II. Condensation
III. (Primitive) Symbolization
IV. Plastic-word representation/dramatization

Interpretation is the way we get from the surface, manifest content of some message to the deeper, latent content. *Insight* is what results—“sight” into the latent content. Interpretation is a difficult problem (Erdelyi, 1985, 1999, 2001), and the insights we achieve are often partial and noisy—liminal or worse. The reverse process, translating (and mistranslating) the latent content into the manifest content is what Freud called, in the context of dream psychology, the dream-work. What is interesting about the process for our purposes is not the dream per se but the techniques involved. In treating jokes, Freud (1905/1960) referred to the equivalent processes as the *joke-work*. In advertising, we might refer to them as the *ad-work* (or “advertising-work”; Williamson, 1987, p. 15).

The dream-work (and its cognates joke-work, ad-work, and so on), is basically a set of techniques for producing a veiled communication—the manifest content. These psychological techniques for veiling or subliminalizing communications are widely used by advertisers, poets, psychotics—really, all of us (albeit often unconsciously). These dream-work techniques, which we generically refer to as the techniques of Freudian subliminality, were extensively discussed by Freud (e.g., 1900/1953, 1905/1960, 1917/1961) and are outlined in Table 2.1.

The first of these dream-work techniques, *censorship*, excludes or degrades troublesome aspects of the latent content in a variety of ways. The bluntest of these is *omission*, which outrightly excludes some feature of the latent content from the manifest content. Censorship, however, often takes subtler forms, semantically degrading aspects of the latent content rather than altogether cutting them out. These softer forms of censorship are referred to by Freud variously as hints, modifications, allusions, and so on. These techniques of Freudian subliminality are widely observed in everyday life—from jokes, art, and psychotic thinking to advertisements.

Let us examine a few examples. Fig. 2.8 reproduces a graffito from the bathroom wall of a Greenwich Village café. The surface (manifest) content does not make much sense. For anyone with a little background knowledge, the latent content expresses (through hints and allusions) a ridiculous proposition along the lines “the cubist Picasso had cubes for testicles.” Of course, this latent content is both silly and a tad off-color. Freud (1905) clearly understood that the joke-work was needed to produce comical effects. Without the mitigation of the latent content, the

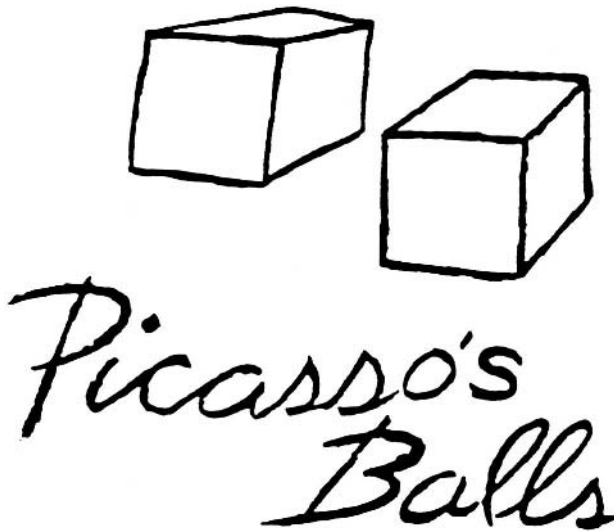


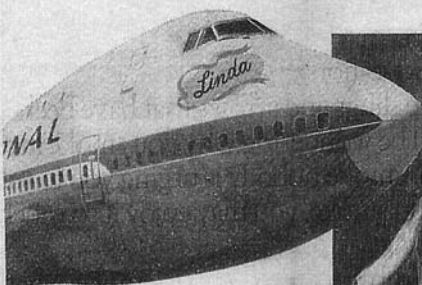
FIG. 2.8 Graffiti from the bathroom wall of a Greenwich Village café. From *Psychoanalysis: Freud's Cognitive Psychology* (p. 171), by M. H. Erdelyi, 1985, New York: W. H. Freeman. Copyright 1985 by Matthew Erdelyi. Reprinted with permission.

communication strikes one as stupidly childish and even offensive. Psychological subliminality degrades the unacceptable latent content sufficiently so that (many of us) adults can actually enjoy it.

Fig. 2.9 reproduces an ad from a long time ago, brought to one of us by a student who was a stewardess (and took umbrage at the ad, along with many of her colleagues). There is nothing explicitly wrong with the manifest content of the "Only Pat has big, beautiful . . ." ad. There is, however, a cumulative string of hints and allusions—from the phallic nose of the plane to "My Time is Your Time" to "Good Things at Night" and, finally, to "I'm Pat. I'm going to fly you like you have never been flown before"—that point to a veiled communication along the lines of "If a man like you flies with us, you are going to have the sexual thrill of your life." To say this too openly, obviously, would be off-putting (and maybe illegal). So, through hints and allusions, the ad (if we are interpreting it correctly) is trying to get away with the unacceptable latent message by psychological degradation to yield a sufficiently obscure (subliminal) expression. *Displacement of accent* is yet another version of subtle censorship. By misplacing emphasis or putting the emphasis in the wrong place (e.g., displacing the U.S. surgeon general's warning on cigarette boxes to off center and rendering it in fine print), the disturbing message is degraded.

The second technique of Freudian subliminality is *condensation*, by which is meant the merging of two or more independent ideas or images, as in the

NEW YORK POST, MONDAY, JANUARY 20, 1973



When you fly me to Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, I've got something pretty special for you. Two free cocktails on all flights for all adults. Plus a choice of delicious returns on lunch and dinner flights. Plus free wine with your meal. And that's in case! Why waste the time (expensive or not) with a National agent and phone.



I have nonstops to Miami/Ft. Lauderdale from early in the morning to late at night. There are 17 in all—including the very comfortable, luxurious 74s, wide-cabin jets and flights from all three New York airports. Here's the complete schedule:

[illegible]

Only National has nonstop wide-cabin nightcoaches from all three New York airports to Miami. Fly from Kennedy, LaGuardia or Newark any night at 9:10. You fly in comfort and luxury, enjoy 2 free cocktails and a snack, and save money as well. We also have a nightcoach from LaGuardia to Ft. Lauderdale at 9:05. There are no lower one-way fares to Miami/Ft. Lauderdale—it's just \$78 (including tax plus a nominal security surcharge). That fare is good on our luxurious 7:17 nightcoaches too.

Everyone who flies me to Florida receives National Airlines exclusive Florida Bonus Book absolutely free. It's like money-saving coupons to top attractions and restaurants across the state. It can save you money every day you're in Florida - and nobody has anything like it but me.

A black and white portrait of a woman with shoulder-length, wavy hair. She is smiling broadly, showing her teeth. She is wearing a dark-colored jacket or sweater over a light-colored top, with a patterned scarf tied around her neck. The scarf has a bold, geometric design with dark and light squares. The background is dark and out of focus.

I'm anxious to show you just how sensational a flight can be, in every way, right down to our very spiffy new uniforms. You can fly me even if you have a ticket on another airline, it's good on National. Just call your travel agent. Or National Airlines. In New York, call (212) 677-9000. In Newark, call (201) 624-1300. In other areas ask the operator for our toll free number.

Call your travel agent.  Fly National.

National honors American Express Bank American Cancer Society Diaper Club Marine Corps Recruiters UATF our own coal and cork

FIG. 2.9 Ad: "Only Pat has big, beautiful . . ." From *New York Post*, January 20, 1978, p. 7.



FIG. 2.10 Elephant man. From *The Beatles Illustrated Lyrics* (p. 76), by A. Aldridge, 1969, New York: Dell. Copyright 1969 by Alan Aldridge Associates Limited (London). Reprinted with permission.

mythological figures of the Centaur (man-horse) or the sphinx (woman-lion-serpent). Fig. 2.10 reproduces a composite image from Alan Aldridge's *The Beatles Illustrated* (1969), which students almost always find funny and rarely struggle to interpret. They inevitably laugh at it and understand that the elephant trunk naughtily represents or suggests the penis of the idiotically smiling man. The degradation of the latent content is so slight that it would probably not be subliminal enough for an ad.

Another critical aspect of Freudian subliminality is *symbolization*, in which the latent content is not expressed directly but through a substitute, the symbol.

This substitute, even when clearly understood by the observer (as in the case of euphemisms), can escape unwanted negative reactions. Freudian symbols are well known, and it is worth noting that they need not be laboriously memorized. This is because the symbols are primitive: They are analogic, expressing ideas through similarity of appearance or function (e.g., the elephant trunk, the nose of the airplane, flying, and so on). It's not difficult to figure out the referent. *Plastic-word representation* (or *dramatization*) is a related concept. Freud observed that dreams tend not to be expressed in abstract, verbal formats but rather in concrete picture images or enactive representations (behavioral dramatizations).

These few Freudian techniques usually occur in tandem, and it is often difficult to separate one from the other. Thus, it is not altogether clear whether we should designate the Macho Cologne ad (Fig. 2.11) a type of symbolic statement or plastic-word representation. Similarly, the butter-up ad (Fig. 2.12) combines all the Freudian techniques to communicate something that would be offensive to many observers if it were explicit. The same goes for the famous Joe Camel character (Fig. 2.13a). It is not difficult to discern (though few observers do spontaneously) the two latent contents expressed in the manifest face (see Fig. 2.13b): (1) penis with testicles and (2) penis in vagina. Primitive symbolism, condensation, and hints and allusions suggest the latent message ("Smoke this brand, guys, and your big organ will find its mark," or some such). In a gizmo variant on this theme (Fig. 2.14a), one can discern the subtle embed of a man with an erection (facing right) on the camel that is depicted on each pack of this brand (see Fig. 2.14b for a highlighting of the man with the erection). There is probably more in the camel, some hanky-panky to the right of the man with an erection, but we need not belabor the point.

The latent contents in these ads are degraded because of defensive considerations. An explicit, supraliminal presentation of the latent contents would yield strong negative reactions among most observers, with an attendant rejection of the product. A recent ad from Absolut Vodka (Fig. 2.15) masterfully gets away with showing much that would be unacceptable in a public ad. The bottle (a phallic symbol) is condensed with a plastic-word representation of the vulva (framed curtains, etc.). The stewardess, pushing her "box," tends to prime the message for the observer. An explicit depiction would yield outrage and rejection by most observers. By subliminalizing the latent content with Freudian techniques, the ad gets away with expressing the forbidden.

These Freudian subliminal techniques were put on the psychological map by Freud, but they are certainly not new. Four centuries before, in his famous triptych, *The Garden of Delights*, Hieronymous Bosch makes use of all these subliminalizing techniques to convey debauchery, sex, sadism, and perverted acts—in short, ideas that are taboo and for which Hell is the reward—without being too explicit and therefore offensive. Fig. 2.16, which bears some resemblances to the Absolut Vodka ad, is a detail from the right panel (*Hell*) of the triptych and depicts, in primitive symbols and plastic-word representations, crude and sadistic images of sexual organs and sexual acts. In the upper left corner, two ears and



FIG. 2.11 Ad for Macho Cologne (Fabergé, Inc.).

a knife are the manifest content. It is not hard to discern the latent counterpart: testicles with a protruding penis. (The condensation of the knife and penis carries a deeper threatening message, which, incidentally, recurs elsewhere in the painting.) A little to the right is a strange bagpipe instrument. The latent content, if we go by physical resemblance, is the female reproductive system: uterus, fallopian tubes, and the vaginal canal (rendered as a reed instrument, perhaps suggesting a crude invitation, "Let's make music," or some such). The little "nun" immediately below the end of the vaginal canal (musical instrument) is an anatomically accurate rendering of the vulva. This is particularly obvious when we take the nun's skirt off (another crude joke?) and the shafts of light about her head. No student



FIG. 2.12 Ad for Butter Up.

ever spontaneously perceives all these latent contents—though many are moved and vaguely disturbed by the painting—but when they are pointed out, the latent content is readily recognized.

IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Contribution of Gizmos, Good and Bad. Gizmos were introduced into the field as a convenient route to degrading stimuli to subliminal levels. Pötzl, as we saw, succeeded in mimicking with his gizmo (a primitive tachistoscope) the effects

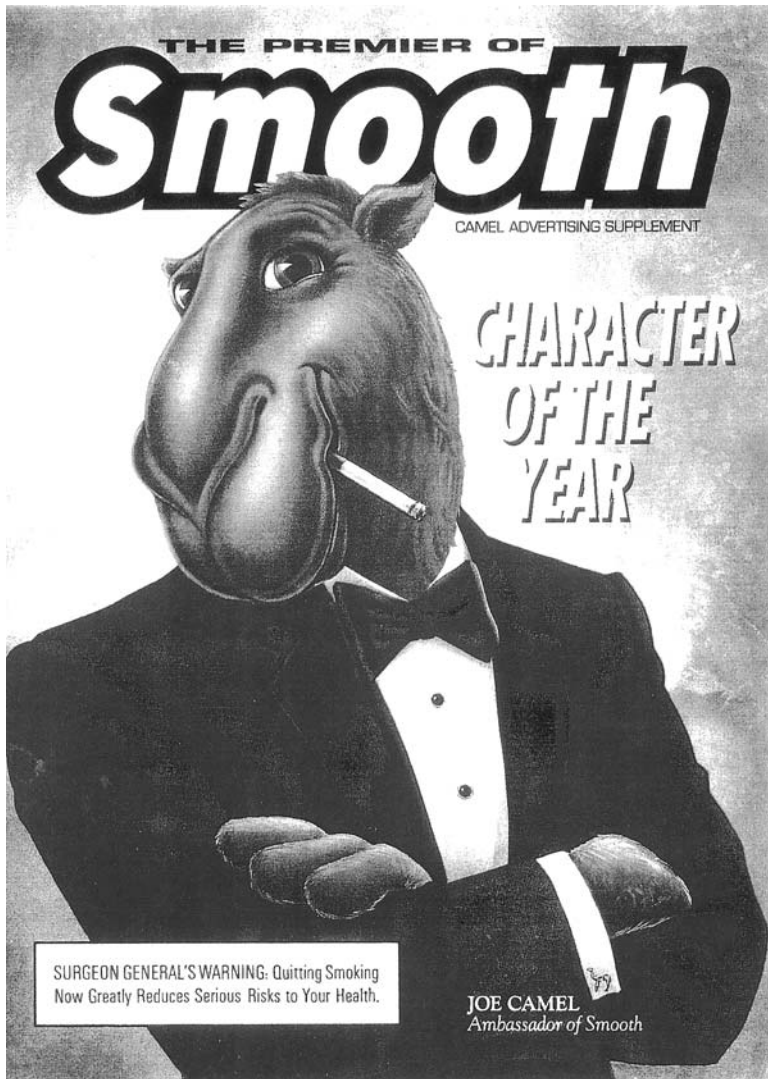


FIG. 2.13a Joe Camel: ambassador of smooth.

of another “gizmo”—a damaged brain. It is obviously a great convenience to be able to produce subliminal effects (e.g., emergence and recovery of input in dreams) with a relatively cheap physical device that can be used with everyday subjects. It is also of great advantage to be able to manipulate the input systematically in a brief laboratory session to evaluate the effect of varied levels of stimulus obscuration.

Obviously, there are upsides to using gizmos to produce subliminality. But there are downsides also. One problem is psychological: Gizmos have the *éclat*

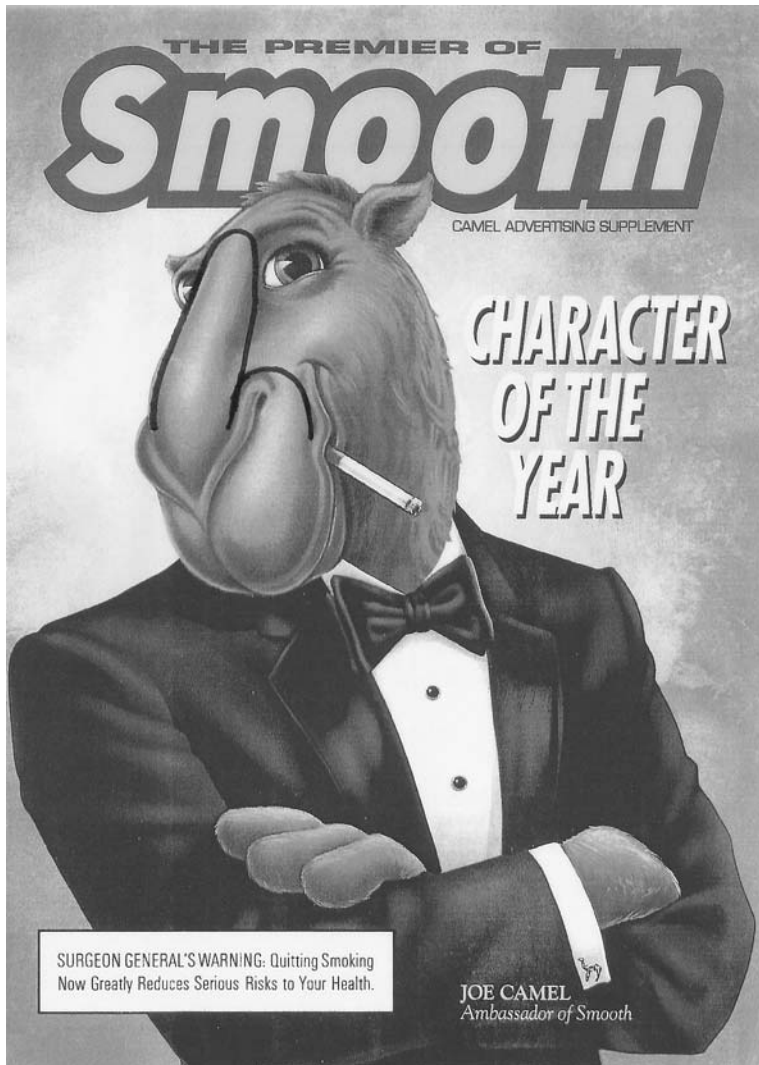


FIG. 2.13b Joe Camel with embed outlined.

of science, and it is all too easy to get trapped into displacing the accent of research from the substantive issues to the paraphernalia of the instrument. As we saw, there is probably no actual limen, except as a statistical abstraction to designate the whereabouts of a region of relative obscurity of awareness, and this limen is not anchored in some gizmo parameter, such as duration, SOA, luminance, and so on, but is anchored in the subject's performance (e.g., 50% hit rate; $d' = 1.0$).

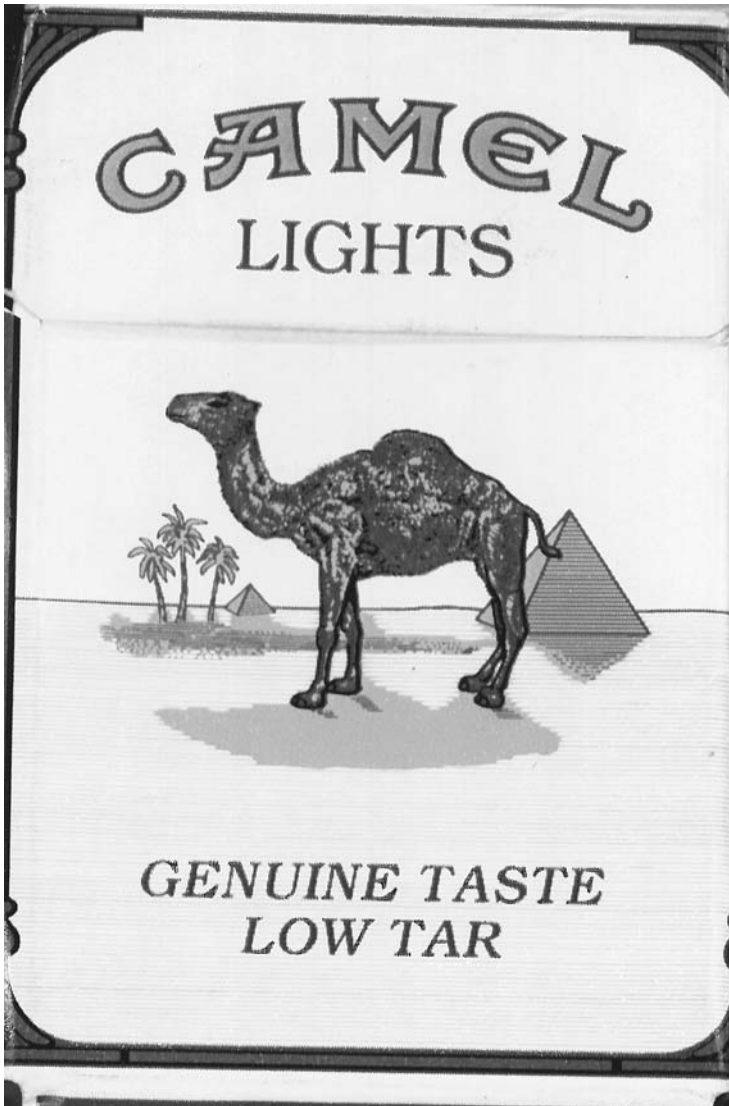


FIG. 2.14a Picture of Camel cigarette pack.

Also, gizmos have their intrinsic limitations. A picture or word can be flashed tachistoscopically, but highly complex materials, as encountered in everyday life (including some advertisements), don't lend themselves to this technique of psychological obscuration. There is a tendency in the experimental literature to gauge subliminal effects by what gizmos are capable of yielding. Thus, Greenwald and his associates (e.g., Draine & Greenwald, 1998; Greenwald, Klinger, &

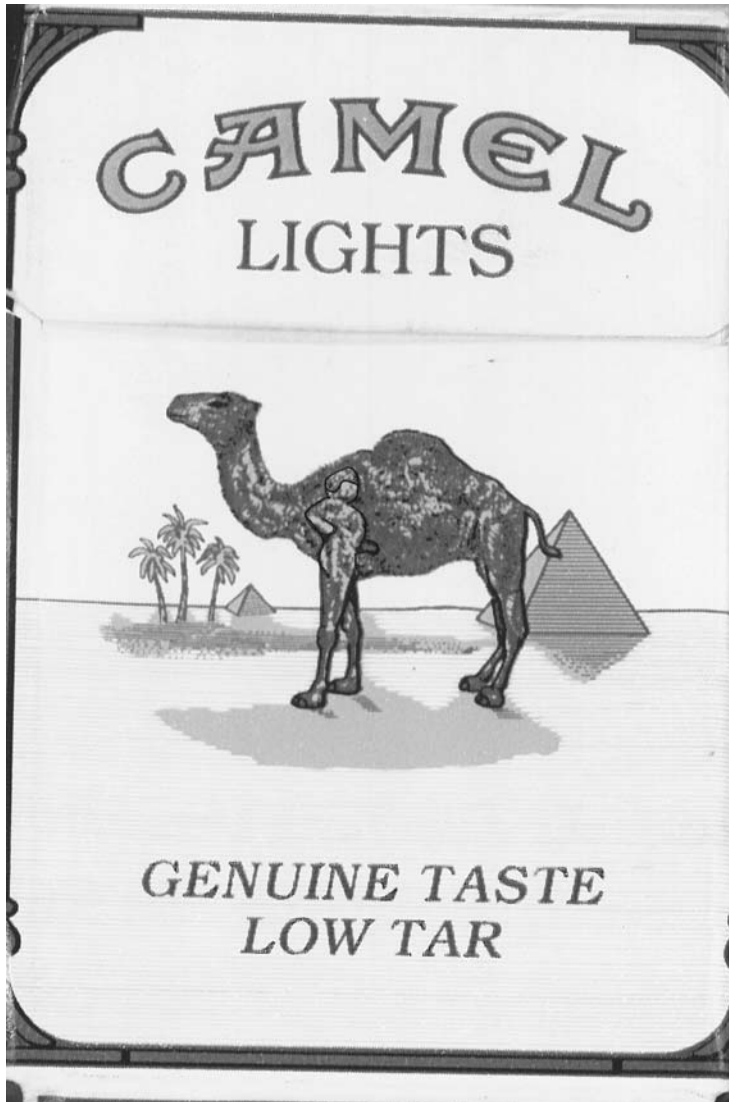


FIG. 2.14b Picture of Camel cigarette pack with embed outlined.

Schuh, 1995), while pursuing imaginative couplings of gizmos with statistical techniques for assessing effects at chance-level awareness, implicitly assume that the subliminal effects thus demonstrated are coterminous with subliminal effects in general, and they reach the much-cited conclusion that the unconscious is “dumb” or simple (Abrams & Greenwald, 2000; Greenwald, 1992). The amount of information that can be transmitted from a degraded stimulus flash is indeed limited—we

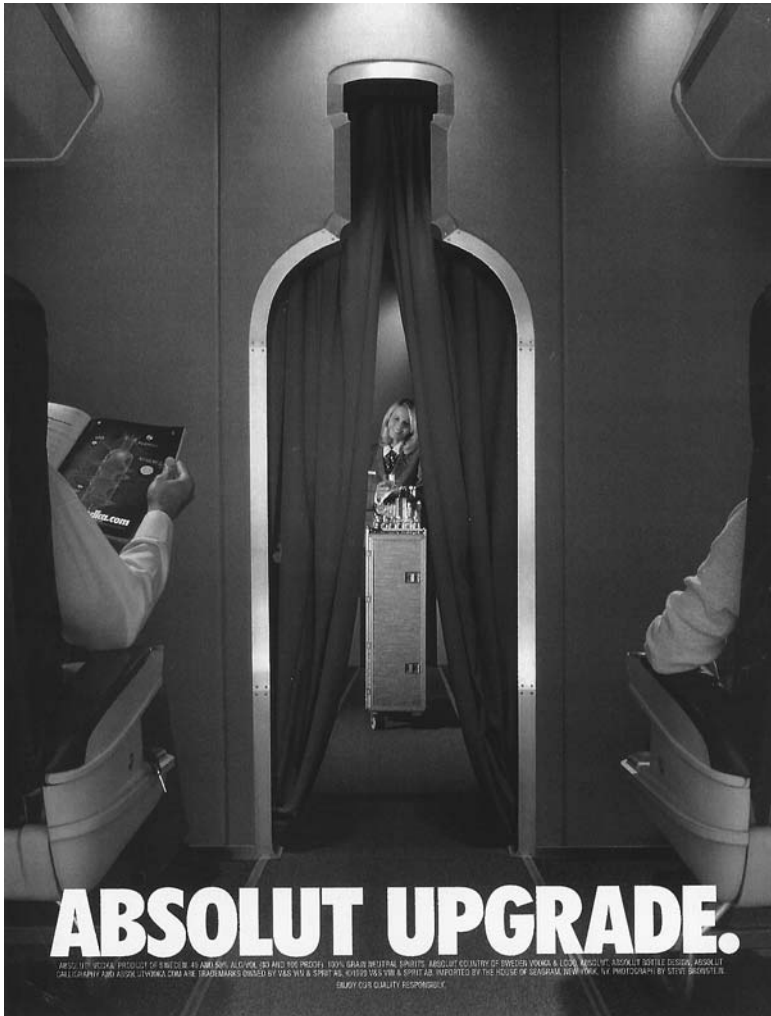


FIG. 2.15 Ad from Absolut Vodka.

would not expect to be able to transmit the contents of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* in a 10-ms flash—but this limit hardly bears on the scope (and genius) of subliminal processes (Erdelyi, 1992, 1999). Thus, perhaps because of the rhetoric of the gizmos, there is a tendency to locate subliminal effects in a contrived experimental paradigm that helps to subliminalize simple, cognitively limited stimulus flashes. It is here where psychological subliminality shifts back the accent to where the vital effects reside—inside the psychological system, which includes memory stores and programs vastly greater in purview and power than that of any paltry encyclopedia.

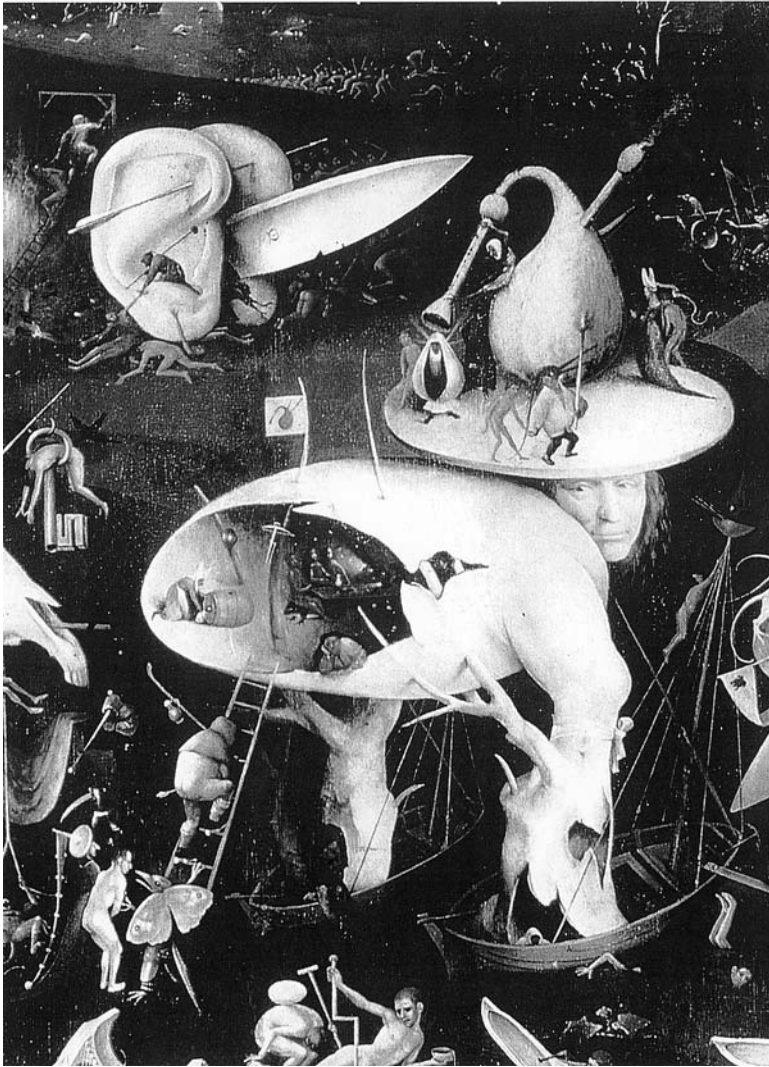


FIG. 2.16 Detail from Hieronymus Bosch's (circa A.D. 1500) *Garden of Earthly Delights*. Copyright by Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY Bosch Hieronymus (C. 1450–1516). Hell. Right panel from the *Garden of Earthly Delights* triptych. Copyright Erich Lessing/Art Resource, NY Museo del Prado, Madrid, Spain. Reprinted with permission.

The Interface Between Gizmo and Psychological Subliminality. It is possible to induce subliminality without gizmos but it is not possible to have gizmo subliminality without psychological subliminality. When Pötzl (1917) or Fisher (1954, 1956, 1988) flashed their stimuli and subsequently evaluated soft cognition like fantasy, word-associations, and dreams, they were drawing on the effects not only of the tachistoscope but also of psychological processes that piggybacked on them, such as forgetting. It may be that the tachistoscope functions mainly to speed up psychological degradation of the input. It has been shown with two children (Erdelyi, 1996) that repeated recalls of a story over periods of months can yield the very types of effects (emergence and recovery, displacements, condensations, symbolic representations) as those found by Pötzl and Fisher in dreams and fantasy following tachistoscopic presentation of the stimulus. The tachistoscopic degradation may be thought of as giving the psychological process a head start. Instead of having to wait for days or weeks for forgetting (and other possible psychological processes) to take their toll on the stimulus, a tachistoscopic flash degrades the stimulus immediately and can produce effects in a brief laboratory session.

Why Is Less, More? Do Subliminal Stimuli Produce More Powerful Effects Than Supraliminal Stimuli? There is no general rule that subliminal effects are more powerful than supraliminal ones. It is the case, however, that subliminal communications are sometimes more effective or that they produce different (and more desired) effects than their clearly conscious counterparts. In the various examples of jokes, ads, and art considered previously, we saw that defensive considerations often dictate the mitigation of raw information. Were the communications not toned down by the various techniques of psychological subliminality, untoward emotional reactions might result in the rejection of the communications, which typically involve primitive (sexual, aggressive) impulses about which we are inevitably ambivalent. We tend simultaneously to be attracted to and repelled by such content. Subliminalizing the message allows us to have our cake and eat it too: The taboo can be partaken of without full awareness and, therefore, responsibility.

Such ambivalence is consistent with the realities of the brain. Different subsystems of the brain represent different neurological constituencies. For example, the amygdala may urge aggression on the aggression center of the ventromedial nucleus of the hypothalamus, while the septum, playing the dove, tries to calm down this same center. It is more complicated than this, of course, and other subsystems also play roles in such neural power struggles (e.g., the hippocampus tends to join the hawk factions, while the cerebral cortex can both urge and inhibit aggression). What may be theoretically productive for our consideration is the hypothesis that different levels of stimulus clarity differentially activate different substrates and thus produce different resultant effects.

There is another critical aspect of consciousness that has been noted perennially by psychologists and neuroscientists: Focal consciousness has a general

structuring and inhibitory function of which defense may be only a subset (e.g., Spence & Holland, 1962). If focal consciousness were fully deployed on some sketchy advertising claim, the subject may well reject it on the basis of logic or reality. If, however, consciousness is degraded, it may fail to inhibit more primitive (and credulous) cognitive subsystems. Dan Gilbert (1991) summarizes laboratory evidence showing that when subjects are presented with some communication, the initial (more primitive) response is to believe in the communication. Apparently the cognitive default value is to believe. Only with additional conscious analysis, which might reveal the problems in the communication, will the subject adopt a critical stance and reject the claim, if it is wanting. Thus, it would be to the advantage of the persuader—especially if his or her message is dubious—to degrade this second analytic stage and maximize the role of the credulous earlier stage.

This kind of distinction between a more primitive and a more advanced form of cognition is central to Freudian psychology. The more primitive system, *primary-process thinking*, is suffused with emotions and drives and is characterized by a primitive cognitive style (it is not realistic or logical; it abides contradictions and has no linear time; its language is imagistic and enactive; it fails to make distinctions and displaces and condenses ideas and images). The more advanced cognitive style, *secondary-process thinking*, which is associated with consciousness, is the opposite: It is realistic, logical, discriminating, and inhibiting, and its language is more abstract (e.g., verbal). Dreams and psychotic thinking—and to a lesser extent art, jokes, and ads—illustrate what happens when secondary-process thinking is weakened and thus fails to inhibit the more primitive effusions of primary-process thinking. Art, poetry, and ads are *compromise formations* that favor our more primitive side. Subliminalization achieves this effect by degrading conscious (secondary-process) functioning and thus tilting the psychological balance toward our primitive side. Emotions and ideas may thus be experienced that might otherwise be inhibited by full-throttled consciousness.

An important experimental literature on the mere-exposure effect might illustrate this idea. Zajonc (e.g., 1968, 2001) has documented over the past few decades the pervasiveness of a simple repetition effect: When some neutral (often meaningless) stimulus is repeatedly exposed to the subject, there is a tendency for this repeated stimulus to be preferred by the subject and to be judged more emotionally pleasing. What would happen if these repeated exposures were subliminal? In a seminal study, Kunst-Wilson and Zajonc (1980) showed that when the stimuli were presented so briefly that the subject could do no better than chance in discriminating them later from stimuli that had never been flashed, the subjects nevertheless preferred the stimuli that had been flashed earlier but which had presumably not been seen. It has been more recently documented that this subliminal mere-exposure effect (or KWZ effect) is significantly stronger, by a factor of 2 to 4, than the supraliminal mere-exposure effect (Bornstein, 1989, 1990, 1992;

Weinberger, 1992; Zajonc, 2001). These data, of course, are relevant to advertisers (see, e.g., Aylesworth, Goodstein, & Ajay, 1999). There is also some evidence that Ebbinghausian subliminality will produce the trick: Up to some point, the mere-exposure effect apparently gets stronger over time (Bornstein, 1989, 1992).

Our general stance is not to argue for the pervasive advantage of subliminal over supraliminal stimuli—just as we would not argue that night is superior to day for all purposes: It depends on what we are working with and what our objective might be. We assume that there are optimal levels of awareness for different purposes. To the extent that we can modulate the level of consciousness, which we apparently can do through numerous venues, we may maximize our desired outcomes by optimizing the level of consciousness, which might be, in many cases, in the region of subliminal obscuration.

From a Concretistic to an Abstract Conception of Subliminal Perception. In effect, the subtext of this paper was to move our overly concretistic conception of subliminal perception, to which experimental psychology has been prone, to a more abstract level. We first showed that subliminality did not depend on any concrete physical device—a gizmo—because psychological techniques of various kinds (only three of which were included in our coverage) could yield the desired obscuration of consciousness. This breakout from the straightjacket of mere physical techniques of stimulus degradation allowed us to consider highly complex (as opposed to “dumb”) types of subliminal processing.

A major additional step, broached in Freudian subliminality, is the idea that perception need not be only a sensory experience of some sort but that it is often, especially with humans, a highly conceptual extraction of meaning. We underscored this idea by contraposing insight with mere sight. It is quite possible for the subject to perceive all the relevant elements of a situation without correctly perceiving a higher order pattern or gestalt (“connecting the dots”). The defense mechanism of denial exactly corresponds to this high-level degradation of perception: The subject, because of emotional vulnerabilities, does not want to “see” the meaning in a situation; hence, the subject fails to put together the fully perceived elements of the situation or puts the elements together incorrectly. Denial, then, is a defensive failure of insight (Erdelyi, 1985).

The extraction of higher order meanings brings us to the everyday realm of subliminal perception because, in virtually every domain of human intercourse—jokes, art, social interactions, and, of course, advertising—the clarity of the subtext is continually modulated, often downward, for successful (if not always the clearest) communication. It is perhaps not surprising that advertisers—along with clinicians, artists, politicians, and diplomats—whose priority is real-world communication over experimental methodology and control—should have intuitively mastered some of these complex, high-level forms of subliminality.

NOTE

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Product Placement: The Nature of the Practice and Potential Avenues of Inquiry

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As marketers continue to vie for the attention of an increasingly fragmented consumer market, they have turned to a variety of communication channels in their efforts to reach customers. One of the channels they have exploited more frequently in recent years is *product placement*, the placing of branded products in movies and television programs. Product placement has been defined as “a paid product message aimed at influencing movie (or television) audiences via the planned and unobtrusive entry of a branded product into a movie (or television program)” (Balasubramanian, 1994, p. 29). It is this unobtrusive entry of a commercial message in a movie or television show that makes product placement different from most other forms of marketing communications. This embedding of commercial messages in another type of communication is a clear example of the blurring of the lines between commercial communications and entertainment, which has become more prevalent in recent years (Solomon & Englis, 1994). This chapter explores the nature of product placement as a marketing communications tool, contrasting it to other communications and discussing the complex and multidimensional nature of the practice. In this chapter I briefly discuss the academic work that has been done on product placement, consider some of the issues that need to be addressed for the field to proceed with future inquiries, and suggest some paths that can be taken to understand product placement more fully.

PRODUCT PLACEMENT: A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PRACTICE

Generally, a product is placed in a movie or television show in return for payment of money or other promotional consideration by the marketer (Gupta & Gould, 1997).¹ Prices can vary for placement, depending on the nature of the placement in the movie (McCarthy, 1994), and can range from nothing to several million dollars (Fournier & Dolan, 1997). The price of product placement can be a function of the type of product that is featured; some product categories are easier to place in a movie than others (McCarthy, 1994). The prominence of the placement in the movie can also affect the price. For example, a placement where the product name is mentioned might cost more than one in which the product logo is simply visible in the background of a scene.

Product placement in movies has actually been around since the 1940s, although it “essentially remained a casual business, an afterthought to most marketers and a low priority for studios” (McCarthy, 1994, p. 30). Brennan, Dubas, and Babin (1999) have suggested that the original motivation for product placements was on the part of the motion picture studios in their effort to add a greater level of reality to the movies by having real brands in the stories. Over time, however, motion picture producers became aware of the commercial value of these placement opportunities, and the practice has become far more prevalent.

In the past decade or so, product placement has become a very sophisticated business, with product placement agencies reviewing scripts in an effort to find product placement opportunities for their marketer clients (McCarthy, 1994). This intensified interest in product placement was likely generated by well-known successes in the 1980s, most notably Reese’s Pieces placement in *E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*, which increased the candy’s sales by 66%, and Rayban’s placement in *Risky Business*, which tripled the sales of the sunglasses worn by Tom Cruise in the movie (Fournier & Dolan, 1997). Product placement is very common today and, in many instances, involves an arrangement between the movie and the product that includes joint advertising and promotion. For example, the cellular phone service Sprint and Burger King restaurants were brands placed in the movie *Men in Black II*. Television advertising for Sprint that ran during the movie’s opening period featured alien characters from the movie; Burger King introduced a special burger that was tied to the theme of the movie. Today, the practice of product placement is not confined to movies and television shows but is being used in music videos and video games as well (Karrh, 1998).

¹In lieu of financial payment, the arrangement for product placement can be a relatively complicated promotional arrangement between the marketer and the movie studio. In these cases, there is often a promotional effort that may be mutually beneficial. For example, for the introduction of the BMW Z3 roadster in the James Bond movie *GoldenEye*, there was an agreement to jointly promote the film and the roadster. BMW does not pay money for product placement as a matter of policy (Fournier & Dolan, 1997). McCarthy (1994) suggested that a promotional arrangement is often preferred to a payment of money because the movie can often benefit more from such arrangement.

The placement of a product in a movie can be as simple as a product being used in one scene (e.g., when a character uses a particular brand of beer or soft drink), a brand being mentioned by a character in the story, or a logo visible in the background of a frame (e.g., when a brand's logo is visible on a billboard or the side of a truck). At the other extreme, a product placement can be a critical and integral part of the movie. In the movie *You've Got Mail*, AOL Internet service was an essential part of the movie and was intimately connected to the plot throughout the entire movie. Not only was the familiar phrase "you've got mail" heard numerous times in the movie when one of the main characters signed on to the Internet service, but AOL was the service through which the main characters communicated for much of the story. Clearly, a product can be placed in a movie or television show in a variety of ways and at a variety of levels. The multifaceted nature of product placement makes it an interesting, albeit complex, marketing practice to understand and strategically use.

PRODUCT PLACEMENT AS MARKETING COMMUNICATION

Given that a product placement can vary from a casual mention of a brand in a single scene of a movie to a brand being a major presence in the story, supported by joint advertising and promotion of the movie and brand, it is perhaps inappropriate to characterize all product placements as essentially the same thing. They can differ quite a bit, and, most likely, the way and at what level viewers process them can vary as well. Having stated this caveat, product placement can be compared to other forms of marketing communications in a number of ways, in that all product placements as a form of marketing communications share some common aspects with one another, but they are different from other forms of marketing communications.

Balasubramanian (1994) considered product placements as one type of a hybrid message, a combination of advertising and publicity. He stated:

Hybrid messages include all paid attempts to influence audiences for commercial benefit using communications that project a non-commercial character; under these circumstances, audiences are likely to be unaware of the commercial influence attempt and/or to process the content of such communications differently than they process commercial messages. (italics in original; p. 30)

As Balasubramanian noted, product placements are generally paid for, just as with advertising, but placements are not identified as paid persuasion efforts by sponsors, which makes them similar to publicity. Therefore, the sponsor gets the best of both of these traditional forms of communication, advertising and publicity. That is, the sponsor has some limited control over the communication (subject to editorial considerations of the movie or television show), but the communication

is not usually identified explicitly as a persuasion attempt; therefore, the effort to persuade is not made salient to the audience.

In a similar discussion, Nebenzahl and Jaffe (1998) considered product placements in their characterization of different kinds of marketing communications and how placements might differ from other kinds of communications. They argued that different marketing communications can be considered along two dimensions: (1) the extent to which the sponsor of the message is disguised, that the message is a paid advertisement is disguised, or both, and (2) the extent to which the persuasive message is secondary to the main message of the communication. Product placements can be contrasted with traditional advertising (and other marketing communications) along these dimensions. In the case of advertising, the sponsor of the product is not disguised, and that it is a persuasive effort by that sponsor is generally clear to the audience. With respect to the second dimension, the advertising (persuasive) message is the salient part of the communication and not secondary to any other message. In contrast, a good product placement is different from an advertisement on both of these dimensions: The placement of the product in a scene in the movie is not connected with the company as an explicit attempt to persuade, and the brand is presented in the context of a story. Considering the second dimension, the persuasive effort is generally secondary to the main communication of the movie or television show.² Although Nebenzahl and Jaffe's main interest related to the ethics of the communications as a function of how communications are presented to the audience in relation to these two dimensions (e.g., they argued that product placement would be less ethical than advertising because placement represents a hidden, disguised persuasion attempt), these dimensions can illuminate the ways viewers might process the messages.

Therefore, the discussions of Balasubramanian (1994) and Nebenzahl and Jaffe (1998) indicate that the noncommercial and somewhat hidden secondary nature of product placements make them inherently different from traditional advertising, and this suggests that viewers may not process them in the same way as they would an advertisement. Friestad and Wright's (1994) discussion of consumers' persuasion knowledge is relevant to considerations of how consumers might process product placements differently from advertising, given the hidden and secondary nature of product placements. Friestad and Wright viewed persuasion knowledge as a set of interrelated beliefs consumers hold that relate to persuasion attempts by marketers. These beliefs focus on the perceived goals and tactics marketers use to persuade consumers, the perceived appropriateness and effectiveness of these tactics, as well the consumers' perceptions of their own ability to cope with marketers' persuasion efforts. Friestad and Wright suggested that when consumers are confronted with a communication and the communication is recognized as an

²A product placement is, in general, secondary to the main communication. However, in the movie *You've Got Mail*, AOL's online service was central to the theme of the story and, therefore, part of the primary communication.

attempt to persuade, a fundamental change of meaning occurs. When consumers recognize a communication as a persuasion attempt, they process the message differently than they would if no such recognition occurred. They may get distracted from the message, disengage from the communication, and develop assessments of the persuasion effort and the company related to the communication. For example, when consumers view an advertisement featuring a spokesperson they admire, their evaluation of the message, the product, the spokesperson, and the company are different than they would be if the consumers are unaware that the advertisement is a paid persuasive attempt. There is a change of meaning with respect to the message that the spokesperson is presenting. The message is interpreted in the context of this persuasion knowledge generated by the awareness that the advertisement is a persuasive communication. For a product placement in a movie or television show, however, a consumer's persuasion knowledge may not be activated because there is a lack of identification of the placement as a persuasion attempt. Therefore, the hidden and secondary nature of product placements may not activate the processes that typically put a consumer on guard in the case of advertising.

It is suggested, therefore, that the stealth nature of product placement is one attribute that might be important in making it work as a promotional tool. However, although the promotional nature of a product placement is often disguised, this is not always the case. The connection of the product placement and the movie is sometimes made clear to consumers through joint advertising and promotion. For example, the launch of the BMW Z3 roadster in the James Bond movie *GoldenEye* included TV and print advertising, a press launch in Central Park, a Nieman Marcus catalog offer, and publicity on Jay Leno's *Tonight Show*; all of these efforts clearly connected the Z3 to the movie *GoldenEye* (Fournier & Dolan, 1997), thus, making it apparent that there was a tie-in between the product and the movie. In particular, the advertising campaign featured both the car and the movie. There are numerous other examples of a product placement in a movie made public via tie-in advertising. Therefore, although it is typically not made salient to viewers that a placement is a promotional effort at the point in time the viewers see the placement, it is somewhat common that the connection between the product and movie is made in advertising and promotional materials. In fact, some professionals argue that promotional tie-ins are key to the success of a product placement. McCarthy (1994) reported that a product placement executive attributed the accompanying promotion to the success of Reese's Pieces in the movie *E. T.*, stating, "Hershey spent a lot of money at retail to let everyone know what *E. T.* was eating" (p. 32) because the bag and candy may not have been apparent in the frames of the movie.

Thus, at first glance it would seem that there is a contradiction between the assumption that product placements derive their success from the disguised nature of them and that many of the successful product placements are ones in which the consumer is made aware of the commercial nature of the placement via the accompanying advertising and promotion. It should be considered, however, that at the time the consumer is seeing or hearing the product placement, the commercial

nature of it is not emphasized, even if the connection has been made in another promotional activity. The product is placed in the context of a story, and it may be that this context is important for the placement's success.

To consider this apparent contradiction, it is instructive to note that product placements are similar to one kind of advertisement in that they involve the presentation of the brand in the context of a story. Wells (1989) discussed two kinds of advertising formats: lectures and dramas. *Lectures* are advertisements that present outwardly to the audience, similar to what a speaker would do in a lecture hall. The television audience is spoken to and is presented with an argument and evidence. According to Wells, an effective lecture presents facts to be believed and should be credible in the presentation of these facts; it is generally clear that there is a persuasion attempt being made. In contrast, Wells suggested that a *drama* advertisement draws the audience into a story. Drama advertisements are like movies, novels, and other stories in that they can present a lesson about how the world works. An important aspect of drama advertisements is that they work by allowing the audience to make an inference about the advertised brand from the story that is presented in the advertisement; this inference may provide a stronger impression than if the audience had been told the point through a lecture format. Wells indicated that an effective drama advertisement must engage the viewer and must be believable as a story. Part of the effectiveness of drama advertisements is that they draw the viewer into the story in such a way that the viewer forgets that the story is a persuasive attempt. With drama advertising, the normal skepticism that consumers may have with respect to advertisements is reduced when they see the product in the context of a story. This idea is consistent with the work of Deighton, Romer, and McQueen (1989) on the use of drama to persuade. In the case of drama commercials, compared with argument commercials (i.e., lecture advertisements), they found that viewers "are less disposed to argue and believe the appeal to the extent that they accept the commercial's verisimilitude and respond to it emotionally" (p. 341).

A product placement could therefore be considered as the ultimate form of drama advertising. The product is in the context of a story, but rather than being in a 30-s story, the product is in a story that generally lasts more than an hour. Thinking of a product placement in this way may help explain a placement's success, even when viewers are aware of the promotional tie-in between the movie and the product through the promotions and advertising. To the extent that the plot of the movie draws viewers in, similar to a drama advertisement, the viewers will see the brand in the story and will not think about it as a persuasion attempt.

Therefore, in the same way that a good story makes us forget that the main character is an actor we may know from other roles,³ a good product placement

³For example, when we see Tom Hanks play Forrest Gump in the movie of the same name, we are not thinking about the person as Tom Hanks but as the slow-witted, well-intentioned man who is the main character of the story. We are drawn in to the story, and it is not salient to us that Hanks is an actor whom we have seen in a variety of other roles and has a personal life about which we know some things.

may be one that fits with the story in such a way as to make us forget that it is there to persuade us. This idea of the fit of a product placement is critical and relates to the notion of seamlessness, to which practitioners in product placement have often referred. Dean Ayers of Entertainment Resources Marketing Association states:

A word that comes up a lot in our work is seamless. Subtly rendered. A blurring of the lines between advertising and entertainment. That's the way placements have to function to be successful. People prefer to see a can of Pepsi or some other familiar brand rather than one that just says "Soda." But nobody wants to pay to see a commercial. You have to pay just the right amount of attention to the product to get this effect. ("It's a Wrap," 1995, p. 4, cited in Fournier & Dolan, 1997, p. 7)

When product placements do not achieve a level of seamlessness, problems can arise. As stated by Gary Mezzatesta of Unique Product Placements, "When the audience snickers and says, 'I wonder how much they paid for that,' you know it's bad" (McCarthy, 1994, p. 32). Thus, when a product placement sticks out as an obvious commercial plug, it may activate viewers' persuasion knowledge as well as distract them from the drama.

Although product placement is likened to drama advertising, there is an important distinction that should be emphasized. A drama advertisement is designed from beginning to end as an advertisement. The purpose of the story is to sell the product. In the case of a product placement, the product placement is generally secondary to the main story. The story that unfolds is not designed as an advertisement for a particular product. Although not intended to do so, it may well be the case that the story incidentally presents a key selling point for a brand. For example, the AOL online service featured in *You've Got Mail* was presented as a useful and exciting way to keep connected to others online. Reese's Pieces in *E. T.* was presented as a tasty snack, desirable to humans and aliens. Numerous examples come to mind of movies that present the luxurious life and suggest the kinds of brands that those who live the luxurious life would use, thus providing a clear, albeit subtle, selling point for a placed product.

THE MULTIDIMENSIONAL NATURE OF PRODUCT PLACEMENTS

Although all product placements share some common characteristics, they can differ in a number of ways. A brand can be visually present in a scene, or it can be mentioned and not seen. A placement can be brief, or the product can be an integral part of a character or the story. Therefore, it is likely that product placements can operate in very different ways, depending on the nature of the placement. Similar to how advertising can work at different levels (i.e., inform, persuade, remind), product placement can operate at different levels, depending on the extent to which and how the placement is woven into the movie.

Russell (1998) characterized product placements as a three-dimensional framework: The first dimension is the extent to which a placement is visual. A placement can be purely visual, such as a product placed in the background of a scene (e.g., a truck with the logo of the placed product on the side). The level of visual placement can also vary as a function of the number times it is seen in the movie or whether it is seen at all. Russell's second dimension is the auditory or verbal nature of the placement. The brand may not be mentioned at all in the dialogue of the story, might be mentioned several times, might be mentioned with emphasis, and so forth. Russell's third dimension is the degree to which the placement is connected with the plot of the movie. At one level, a brand can simply be one that is visible in a scene of a movie and not connected to the main part of the story. In this instance, it may only be a prop. For example, in movies we often see a billboard or a brand name on the side of a truck in the background of the action of the scene. At the other end of this dimension, a product placement can be intimately tied to the plot, as in *You've Got Mail*, or be closely connected to the nature of the character, as the type of car that James Bond drives or the brand of wristwatch he wears.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PROCESSES AND PRODUCT PLACEMENT

The dimensions discussed by Russell (1998) illustrate the complexity of investigating how consumers may process product placements. The multidimensional nature of product placements, and how they can differ on each of these dimensions, suggests that a variety of psychological processes are operating when a viewer sees a brand in the context of a movie or television show.

At the most basic level, when product placements are merely seen or mentioned in a story, the process may be as simple as affective classical conditioning or mere exposure. As Baker (1999) explained, affective classical conditioning is the pairing an unconditioned stimulus (e.g., a beautiful scene) with the conditioned stimulus (e.g., a brand of product) such that the good feelings associated with the scene are transferred to the brand. Although often discussed in the context of advertising, it is easy to see how such a psychological process can be used in product placements. Russell (1998) suggested that products in the background of a scene may often be processed by this nonconscious association between the brand and the movie. The conditioning process simply requires a viewer to make an association between the response to the scene or movie (i.e., the good feelings) and the brand that is placed.

If affective conditioning is indeed the process at work for simple and brief product placements, a potential complication for the placement of a brand arises. When viewers are watching a movie or television show, they typically experience a variety of both positive and negative feelings during the course of the story, including joy, anger, fear, disbelief, hatred, and sadness. It may be difficult to predict which feeling will be associated with the brand. There is the possibility that a negative feeling will be linked to the brand. For example, in a scene of the

movie *The Silence of the Lambs*, crumpled Arby's wrappers and cups were among the debris in the rather shabby house of the serial killer hunted by Jody Foster's character in the story. Focus group respondents reported a negative association between Arby's and the character in the movie, indicating that if they ate at Arby's, they would be reminded of the killer (Fournier & Dolan, 1997).

A second possibility is that the construct of mere exposure may explain simple product placements (Vollmers & Mizerski, 1994). Mere exposure suggests that viewers will develop more favorable feelings toward a brand simply because of their repeated exposure to it (Baker 1999). Janiszewski's (1993) work showed that mere exposure may result in more favorable attitudes toward a brand, even though the viewer does not necessarily recall the exposure to the brand. It would seem that mere exposure may help explain some types of product placements, particularly ones involving brands presented as props in one or more scenes of a movie.

Clearly, many product placements are more involved than a simple mention of the brand in the dialogue or the logo visible in the scene. As Russell (1998) suggested, they may have more plot connection and not simply be a prop used in a scene. Product placements are often intimately tied to the character in the story or to the story line. For example, the brands associated with James Bond are closely tied to the nature of the character. In fact, the brands that James Bond uses help define him as a character; they are part of his essence. Although conditioning or mere exposure may well be a part of why these work, there may be more higher order processing related to placement in these circumstances. A transformational process has been suggested as such a possibility (Russell, 1998). *Transformational advertising*, as discussed by Puto and Wells (1984), is advertising that transforms or changes the experience of using a product such that the product becomes more than it would otherwise be, making it "richer, warmer, more exciting, and/or more enjoyable" (p. 638). Numerous examples of transformational advertising come to mind, including advertising for such products as jewelry, perfume, automobiles, and liquor.

In a similar way, a viewer's experience of using a brand can be transformed because the brand is embedded in a movie. The product is not just seen in its functional sense but becomes the brand that is considered in the context of the story. It is, as Puto and Wells's (1984) discussion would suggest, endowed with the characteristics associated with the movie. A BMW is not just a well-made German automobile but is the car that James Bond drives. AOL is not just a way to connect to the Internet but the way that trendy New Yorkers in *You've Got Mail* do so.

A similar notion is that of lifestyle advertising (Solomon & Englis, 1994). Solomon and Englis argued that lifestyle advertising associates a product with a way of life, perhaps presenting it in the context of glamorous life or the good life. These ads can act as models of living. Similarly, a product placed in a movie can profit from the model of living that the story presents. An admirable character using a particular brand tells the audience that this is the "in" or "cool" brand of a particular product category or the way to the good life.

Therefore, many product placements are more than just a matter of a brand being seen or mentioned in a movie; they benefit from their connection to the plot. It would seem that the issue of plot connection is a very fundamental distinction between types of product placements. That is, whether the placement is connected to the plot or simply a prop would seem to be a basic qualitative difference in types of placements. Connection to the plot makes a placement a different phenomenon and brings to bear a whole set of psychological processes that are likely absent for a prop placement. It is suggested, therefore, that product placement is a complex, multidimensional concept that may operate at different levels and affect viewers through a variety of psychological processes. Before considering where future research should head with respect to product placement, the next section briefly reviews the academic work on product placements.

ACADEMIC STUDIES ON PRODUCT PLACEMENT

As the use of product placement has increased over the past 2 decades, there has been an increasing interest in the practice among academic researchers. Until rather recently, studies on product placement have generally related to three topic areas: the prevalence and nature of product placement in movies, the attitudes and beliefs about the practice of product placement, and the effects of placements in movies and television (DeLorme & Reid, 1999). Very recently, research has emerged that is attempting to understand the complexity of product placement. Rather than presenting an exhaustive review of the academic literature, this section summarizes what is known from research on product placement. For a more in-depth discussion of the prior work on product placement, see DeLorme and Reid (1999) or Karrh (1998).

Studies Investigating the Prevalence of Product Placement

Studies investigating the prevalence of product placement (Troup, 1991, cited in DeLorme & Reid, 1999; Sapolsky & Kinney, 1994) have found that the practice is fairly common in movies; Avery and Ferraro (2000) documented a similar prevalence in prime-time television. Both studies on product placement in movies found that the majority of placements were for low-involvement products. The Sapolsky and Kinney study did find, however, that automobiles, a high-involvement product category, accounted for 18% of all placements.

Studies Investigating Consumers' Attitudes and Perceptions About Product Placement

Several studies have investigated the attitudes and perceptions of viewers regarding the practice of product placement (Gupta & Gould, 1997; Nebenzahl & Secunda, 1993; Ong & Meri, 1994). These studies were efforts at determining whether

moviegoers find the practice objectionable, given the stealth and “deceptive” nature of the product placement, as claimed by some consumer groups. Interestingly, these studies found that, in general, the majority of people in the United States don’t object to the practice of product placement. In fact, the results of the Nebenzahl and Secunda study showed that the respondents preferred product placements to traditional advertisements, and the authors of that study suggested that this preference relates to the notion that advertisements are perceived as intrusive and annoying, whereas the unobtrusive nature of product placements makes them more palatable to consumers. The study by Gupta and Gould showed that although people generally perceive product placement to be an acceptable practice, perceptions differ by product class. That is, product placements involving products that are controversial (i.e., tobacco products and alcohol) are perceived as less acceptable than noncontroversial products.

Studies Investigating the Effectiveness of Product Placement

The most active area of academic research on product placement relates to the effects of placement on viewers. The effects have generally been considered in terms of memory (recognition and recall), evaluation of the brands, and purchase intention. A 1994 study by Ong and Meri found that recall of placed brands was weak for many of them. Babin and Carder (1996a) found that product placement was mixed with respect to making brands salient to viewers, and this study found no effect of the viewing of product placements on brand evaluations. In another study, Babin and Carder (1996b) investigated the ability of viewers to recognize brands they saw in a movie they had just viewed and to distinguish these from brands not in the film. Results showed that, in general, respondents were able to differentiate between brands they had viewed and brands they had not viewed. Vollmers and Mizerski (1994) found that recall of brands in movie clips was very high, but there was no apparent effect of the placements on the attitude toward the brands.

These early studies on the effects of product placement yielded mixed results with respect to the recall or recognition of brands placed in films; these studies generally showed weak or nonexistent effects of placement on brand evaluations. The mixed and weak results of these early studies on effectiveness are, in part, because these studies generally failed to recognize the multidimensional nature of product placement. That is, they tended to define product placements as similar, regardless of modality (visual or verbal) and level of plot connection. Recently, there have been some investigations that have attempted to consider these complexities of product placement.

Gupta and Lord (1998) conducted a study that evaluated the effectiveness of product placements of different modes (visual, audio) and different levels of prominence of the placement; the study also compared product placement with advertising. Recall was used as the measure of effectiveness. Subjects were shown a

30-min clip from a movie that contained either a product placement, an advertisement edited into the film in a fashion similar to how an ad would interrupt a movie shown on television, or neither of these (the control condition). The respondents viewed a prominent visual placement, a subtle visual placement, an audio-only placement, a visual-only placement, an audio-visual placement, an advertisement, or, in the control condition, no placement or advertisement. The results showed that prominent placements were remembered better than advertisements, and advertisements were remembered better than subtle product placements. An explicit audio product placement was remembered better than a subtle visual placement.

Brennan, Dubas, and Babin (1999) investigated the relationship of type of placement (prop or more integral to the story) and exposure time with recognition of the placement. Their results showed that placements more central to the story were remembered better. The effect of exposure time was a little less clear. Exposure time did not relate to recognition for background placements, but there was some indication that length of exposure was related to recognition for placements that were more central to the story.

Law and Braun (2000) attempted to understand the impact of product placements as a function of the nature of the measurements (explicit memory and implicit choice), the centrality of the placement to the plot, and the modality of the placement. An interesting finding of their study was that products that were seen, but not heard, were least recalled but had more influence on choice than those only heard or seen and heard. The researchers suggest that this work has implications for the way viewers process product placements in that placements that may not be consciously remembered may nevertheless have influences on viewers' brand choices.

Russell (2002) investigated product placements as a function of the modality (visual and auditory) and the degree of connection between the plot and the placement; the focus of the study was the congruency between modality and plot connection. Russell reasoned that congruent instances would be auditory placements with high plot connection or visual placements with low plot connection. Incongruent situations would be auditory placements with low plot connection or visual placements with high plot connection. Her reasoning with respect to congruency relates to the importance that spoken information typically has for story development, relative to visual information. As predicted by Russell, the results showed that incongruent placements were remembered better than congruent ones; however, attitude toward the brands changed more in instances with congruent placements.

Thus, the recent research by Law and Braun (2000) and Russell (2002) points to the complexity of product placement and how it is measured. The results of these two studies suggest that memory for the placements may be independent of the evaluations of the brands that are placed. These studies are a step toward considering the way people process different kinds of placements.

POTENTIAL AVENUES OF RESEARCH

Recent research on product placement is beginning to move beyond simply documenting the memory or evaluative effects of the phenomenon and considering the underlying psychological processes. Future research should focus on understanding the psychological processes that relate to product placement in relation to variables that will help researchers understand how product placements work. This section considers some potential areas of inquiry.

Salience of Product Placement

As I have noted, the seamlessness of the product placement has been recognized by practitioners as an important element of the practice, suggesting that the less the viewers think of the placement as a plug for the product, the more successful the placement will be. Thus, the issue of salience of the placement is an important area of potential research that may help researchers understand the impact that product placement may have on consumers' evaluation of the product. Salience of placements as a promotional effort can occur in different ways. The seamlessness of a product placement is the degree to which the placement fits in the context of the story or is visually appropriate in a scene of the movie.

Other information can confirm to viewers that a product they see is a placement. For example, warnings displayed either before a movie or at the time a placement appears in a movie have been proposed by some consumer groups (Bennett, Pecotich, & Putrevu 1999), and these would explicitly alert viewers to the paid promotional nature of the appearance of the brand in the movie. Advertising and other promotional efforts can alert viewers that a product is a paid placement. The potential research questions of interest relate to how the salience of a product placement as a paid promotional effort bears on the way viewers process the placement and the outcomes of the placement (i.e., memory, evaluation of the placed product).

Three research themes would relate to this issue of salience. One would be the extent to which the placement fits with the story and the presence or absence of cues at the time of the placement that alert the viewer to a paid placement; in other words, the degree of seamlessness of the product placed in the story. Russell's (2002) work on congruity suggests that the salience of the placement as a paid promotion may increase memory for the product but may have an adverse effect on the evaluation of the product. Friestad and Wright (1994) would argue that information that makes the placement salient as a promotion should activate persuasion knowledge and may affect evaluations of the brand.

A second theme would be the effect of explicit warnings to the existence of product placements. As noted, consumer groups have argued for warnings because they view product placements as an intentional commercial message and that viewers have a right to know this. These warnings should make it salient that a product placement is present. One would expect that such warnings would activate

persuasion knowledge. One study thus far has shown that warnings before a movie actually enhance the memory of product placements (Bennett, Pecotich, & Putrevu, 1999), suggesting the warning acts as a cue for memory. This study showed no effects of the warnings on evaluations of the brands. It is important to investigate not only the outcomes of such warnings but also how consumers process the placements in the context of such cues.

As advertising and promotional tie-ins with placements become more prevalent, it will be worthwhile to understand how consumers process placements in the context of the promotions that occur in conjunction with many placements. As this chapter has pointed out, such advertising and promotion may not affect efficacy of placements to the extent that the placements are well integrated into the story. Clearly, such tests may be difficult to perform because they require the investigation of real placements under a variety of promotional conditions.

Involvement and Context

Research on advertising in the context of television programs has shown that higher involvement with the story reduces the involvement viewers have with the commercial (Park & McClung, 1986). A product placement, however, is part of the movie or television show. This raises the question of the relationship of plot involvement with product placement, both placements that are connected to the plot and those that are prop placements. One might expect that high involvement in the story would enhance the effects of product placements that are intimately tied to the plot of the movie because involvement in the story would relate to involvement with products important to the plot. How involvement would affect prop placements that are not tied to the plot is a little less clear. It may be that high involvement would reduce the effects of placement in these cases. A study by Pham (1992) showed that involvement had a curvilinear relationship with recognition of embedded billboards at a soccer game; those who were very involved or not very involved showed less recognition than those experiencing a moderate level of involvement in the game. Assuming that embedded billboards at a sports event are equivalent to products that are props in movies, a similar pattern might be expected for prop placements.

Placement and Product Characteristics

A potentially useful area of research relates to the characteristics of products for which product placement would provide the most benefit. For example, is product placement more beneficial for a relatively unknown brand where association with the story line or character would build awareness and interest or is it more useful for brands for which consumers have prior information where the placement would reinforce existing beliefs? For example, the sales of Red Stripe Beer, a relatively unknown brand, increased more than 50% in 3 months after it was briefly mentioned in a scene of the movie *The Firm* (Buss, 1998). Would the effect on sales of

a brief placement have been as dramatic if consumers had more knowledge about the brand and were relatively indifferent to it?

Another product characteristic of interest is the extent to which the product is utilitarian or value expressive. Products such as liquor, cars, and jewelry are value expressive in that people often buy them to express themselves through their products. These types of products can be a part of an individual's extended self (Belk, 1988). Other products are utilitarian and typically say little about the person who uses them. This distinction is commonly made in advertising, and the kind of advertising used generally varies with the nature of the product. It would be useful to understand how product placements are processed as a function of the level of plot connection and the level of value expressiveness. For example, a utilitarian product tightly woven to the plot may not be processed in the same way as a value expressive product. A utilitarian product, no matter how important to the story, would not be as much a defining characteristic of the character as would the things that typically define someone, such as their clothes, cars, or jewelry. Alternatively, the level of value expressiveness of the product may not be expected to relate to the efficacy of the placement in instances when the product is simply a prop in a scene. It would be useful to understand more about the kinds of products that benefit from different kinds of product placements.

Long-Term Effects of Product Placement

Product placement can likely have both short- and long-term effects on evaluation of the brand. Given temporal limitations, academic studies have only measured the short-term effects of product placement. That is, academic studies have generally measured recall, recognition, evaluation, choice behavior, or all of these effects combined, shortly after study participants viewed a movie or a movie clip. Similar to advertising, however, product placement can have long-term effects on the brand image and equity. Furthermore, product placements can set other things in motion that can have effects on the brand. For example, a product placement can create a word-of-mouth effect such that the long-term effect of the placement reaches well beyond those who may have actually seen the product in a movie. Long-term effects can be difficult to measure but are likely an important contribution of product placement.

CONCLUSION

Over the past decade, there has been an increase in the use of product placement in movies and television shows as marketers attempt to find new ways to communicate with their customers. Although many marketing practitioners seem to have an intuitive understanding of how product placements work in different contexts, academic researchers have lagged behind in their efforts to systematically investigate

the practice. Far more is known about product placement than was known even a decade ago, but it is only recent work that has acknowledged the complexity of the phenomenon. Recent work has begun the task of investigating the psychological processes that may be important to understanding how placements work in a variety of circumstances. As this chapter suggests, however, there is far more to consider in the future.

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Product Placements: How to Measure Their Impact

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With product placement—the deliberate insertion of branded products into an entertainment program aimed at influencing the audience—becoming increasingly popular, research into its effectiveness is a timely topic. In this chapter, we propose that the explicit-implicit memory model suggested by cognitive psychologists offers a promising framework for this area of research. We begin by describing recent occurrences of product placements and what the research in this area has found. We present some of the limitations of the traditional methods of measuring product placements. We argue that the product placement literature can be greatly enhanced by considering the explicit-implicit memory framework, which provides a conceptual vocabulary to help organize empirical observations. This framework also helps formulate research hypotheses on when and how product placements will affect thought and behavior.

In Spielberg's film *Minority Report* a large part of the film's screen time is devoted to product placements—15 brands appear in the film, and reports indicate that these placements offset more than 25 million dollars of the production costs (Grossberg, 2002). Product placement is not a new phenomenon; it dates back to the 1940s, at the start of the movie industry when the goal was to make scenes appear more realistic. However, it was Spielberg's use of Reese's Pieces in *E. T.* that led to the popularization of the practice in movies. A decade later *Seinfeld's* phenomenally successful use of products, such as Junior Mints, led to the common practice of TV placements. *Survivor*, for instance, prominently

featured products and logos from advertisers, such as Target and Dr. Scholl's. A recent study of U.S. national networks (i.e., ABC, CBS, NBC) revealed that as many as 15 branded products appear in every halfhour of television programming, about 40% of which are placements (Avery & Ferraro, 2000). Product placements are now making their way from the small screen to video games (Bannan, 2002).

Most movie and TV studios now have product placement departments, and product placement is seen as a viable promotional medium by corporate America. With advertisers seeking new ways to stand out, and broadcasters looking for new sources of revenue, product placements have grown in number. Practically, placements appear to be a good deal for manufacturers: They often cost less than traditional advertising, appear in a low clutter environment, appeal to a worldwide audience, get recycled with the program, imply a celebrity endorser, and are in an optimal environment where consumers are captive to the product's placement (no remotes!). Despite these benefits, an issue of concern for marketers is whether placements work. And if so, how. Thus far the research on product placements has been mostly anecdotal and is not always reliable. The *E. T.* placement, for instance, succeeded because of Hershey's publicity department. The actual placement was pretty insignificant—a couple of bags in the dark—and there is no direct evidence that the placement itself influenced behavior. The film industry has had no incentive to employ research in this area. For corporate America, the percentage of advertising budgets dedicated to placements was, until recently, too small to justify any rigorous study. But now as placements become more common, and as marketers steer toward unconventional marketing arenas, the need for research in this area increases. A unifying theory based on strong psychological evidence is needed to guide the practical issues marketers face, such as whether their placement will be visual, auditory, or both. Is it worth more to be central to the plot or can even a subtle, less costly placement be effective? Most important, are placements more or less effective than conventional media?

The answers to these questions depend on the quality of the dependent measures employed, and, unfortunately, although the increased use of product placements suggests their effectiveness, the academic research has, at best, produced mixed results. For instance, there is some support for the notion that product placements facilitate brand memory (Babin & Carder, 1996; Vollmers & Mizerski, 1994). Other investigators, in contrast, have found inconsistent or nonsignificant effects of placement on brand memory (Karrh, 1994). It is important to note that to date the measures most commonly used to assess placement effects have been recall and recognition (see Table 4.1). We contend that research in marketing (and in placement effects in particular) has been held back by the research methods employed. Specifically, we believe that the recall and recognition measures are not capable of detecting the more subtle effects of product placements.

Traditionally, marketing researchers have relied on recall and recognition to assess advertising effectiveness. This measurement bias is a by-product of the

TABLE 4.1
Review of Product Placement Research

<i>Researcher</i>	<i>Stimulus</i>	<i>Measure</i>	<i>Test Instructions</i> <i>Reference Viewing Context</i>	<i>Measure Classification</i>
Babin and Carder (1996)	One of two entire movies (<i>Rocky III</i> or <i>Rocky V</i>), each containing several placements	Brand recognition	Yes	Explicit
d'Astous and Chartier (1999)	Eighteen movie clips consisting of one placement each	Brand recall ("What products or brands do you recall having seen?")	Yes	Explicit
Gupta and Lord (1998)	Thirty-min excerpt of one of three movies (<i>Big</i> , <i>Project X</i> , <i>Ferris Bueller</i>) containing a product placement	Brand recognition	Yes	Explicit
		Brand recall	Yes	Explicit
		Brand recognition	Yes	Explicit
		Recall of placement context	Yes	Explicit
Karrh (1994)	Thirty-three-min excerpt of <i>Raising Arizona</i> containing five brand placements (Kellogg's Corn Flakes, Huggies diapers, etc.)	Top of mind awareness	No	Implicit
		Brand familiarity	Yes	Explicit
		Brand recall	Yes	Explicit
		Brand evaluation	Yes	Explicit
Law and Braun (2000)	One of two 10-min excerpts of a TV program, <i>Seinfeld</i> , each containing at least six placements	Brand choice	No	Implicit
		Brand recall	Yes	Explicit
		Brand recognition	Yes	Explicit
		Brand attitude	Yes	Explicit
Russell (2002)	Twenty-seven-min screenplay developed for the experiment	Brand attitude	No	Implicit
		Brand recognition	Yes	Explicit
Vollmers and Mizerski (1994)	Two movie clips, each approximately 3 min in length	Brand recall ("Did you notice any branded products in the scenes just viewed?")	Yes	Explicit
		Brand attitude	Yes	Explicit

dominant theory, which states that learning requires attention, effort, and concentration. In other words, only cues available to consciousness should impact behavior. The conclusion then for placement researchers was that to be effective a placement ought to be consciously recalled. Indeed, this conclusion is reflected in the way the industry tests placement effectiveness and, in turn, impacts what marketers pay for certain placements. As an example, CinemaScore, the primary product placement research technique, incorporates after-viewing recall of placements into a formula consisting of projected box office receipts to output a price for the placement. Using that formula they calculated a \$28,130 placement fee for Coca-Cola in the movie *Crocodile Dundee*. However, there is no report as to the reliability of this system (Gupta & Lord, 1998).

One of the most important developments in modern cognitive psychology has been the realization that past experience can affect subsequent performance in a multitude of different ways. In addition to the traditional expressions of memory, such as recall and recognition, people also show effects of prior experience that are unaccompanied by conscious recollection of the past, and these effects may manifest themselves as changes in perception, categorization, response accuracy, reasoning, and even motor behavior. The purpose of this chapter is to review evidence from psychology and marketing literature suggesting that learning can occur without awareness, make the distinction between implicit and explicit memory measures, distinguish the research methods used to tap these very different types of memories, and demonstrate how these methods apply to product placement research. We then outline our future research agenda for this area.

EXPRESSIONS OF LEARNING WITHOUT AWARENESS

Memory had been viewed by scientists as a singular system in which information enters the brain, resides in short-term storage and then moves to a longer-term storage. In 1962, that all changed. Debra Milner and colleagues observed a new type of memory on her patient, HM (Milner, 1966). HM had had an epileptic seizure that led to a radical bilateral temporal lobe lesion, resulting in severe difficulty in learning new factual information and an inability to remember daily happenings (anterograde amnesia). In other words, HM appeared to have no functional episodic memory and, hence, could no longer lay down new memories—for instance, or identify a picture that had been taken of him after the operation, he could not tell you the name of the current president. Yet his performance on other typically unrelated tasks of memory showed that information must somehow be reaching and be getting stored in his brain. For example, as part of HM's learning routine, Milner would ask HM to track a moving object. His performance, just like people with intact memories, became increasingly accurate, even though HM was not aware that he had performed the task before.

Distinction Between Explicit and Implicit Memory: Theoretical Overview

These observations led in the 1980s to a critical classification of memory into two dimensions: consciousness (or awareness) and intent, dimensions captured in the distinction between explicit and implicit memory (Graf & Schacter, 1985; Roediger & McDermott, 1993; Schacter, 1987). Explicit memories are both conscious, in the sense that the person is aware of remembering prior events, and intentional, in the sense that the person in some sense wants, or voluntarily intends, to retrieve them. In contrast, implicit memories are unconscious, in the sense that the person is unaware of retrieving or otherwise being influenced by prior events, and their retrieval is thought to occur involuntarily or without intent (Jacoby, 1984). Explicit memory is typically assessed with recall and recognition tasks that require intentional retrieval of information from a specific prior study episode, whereas implicit memory is assessed with tasks that do not require conscious recollection of specific episodes. An early example of a striking dissociation was HM, who showed severe impairment on a test of item recognition but nevertheless showed normal retention of new information as measured on an implicit tracking task.

A major issue concerns the most appropriate way of characterizing and explaining such variety in expressions of memory, with two general perspectives defining the theoretical landscape. The most popular view is that the various expressions of memory reflect the operation of multiple memory systems. Perhaps the strongest advocate of the multiple memory systems approach has been Daniel Schacter of Harvard University, who recommends adopting a cognitive neuroscience approach in which evidence from brain lesion studies, functional dissociations, neuroimaging studies, and studies of nonhuman primates converge to suggest the existence of distinct memory systems (Schacter, 1992). In his research Schacter found distinct areas of the brain are involved in these two types of memory (see Fig. 4.1): For explicit memory to occur, the frontal lobes must be active, which is an effortful process. Implicit memory, on the other hand, relies more on the older sections of the brain, the subcortical areas, such as the cerebellum and another part of the limbic system, the amygdala, where the fight-flight response emerges. Both implicit and explicit memory involve the limbic system—the brain's emotional center—particularly the hippocampus, which is involved in laying down and retrieving memories. According to the memory systems view, then, memory is the process of activating the representations stored in a particular system. Once activated, the representations are able to influence a person's performance with the nature of that influence being dependent on the kind of information or content residing in the representation. Thus, for the systems approach, memory is explained by reference to structural concepts.

The alternative processing approach (pioneered by Henry Roediger) does not postulate multiple memory systems, nor does it rely on an explanation based on underlying memory representations or storage systems. Rather, it views memory as emerging from the interaction between a person with a prior history of

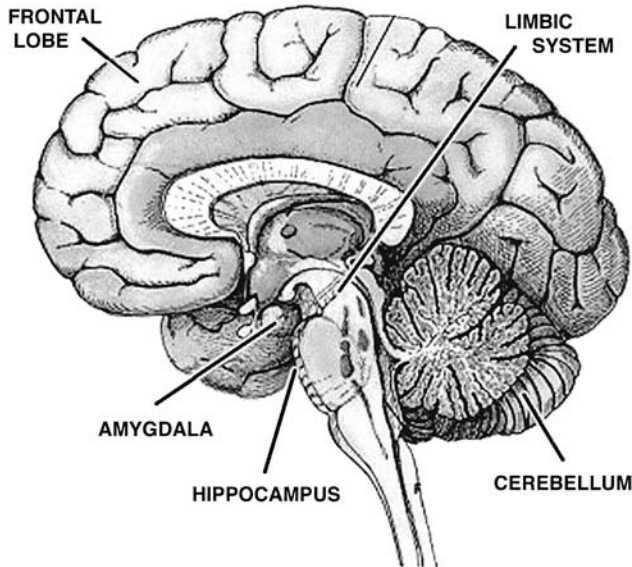


FIG. 4.1 Implicit and explicit memory in the brain.

experiences and the environmental situations (e.g., the memory task demands, processing), which together determine how prior experience gets expressed in subsequent performance.

How to Measure Explicit and Implicit Memory

The debate between systems and process theorists remains alive and contentious. Nevertheless, although these theoretical positions differ from one another in more or less important ways, they are both in agreement that explicit and implicit memory does not respond to experimental manipulations in the same way. To understand the practical distinction between explicit and implicit memory, it is often helpful to consider how their measurement methods differ. Measures of explicit memory are typically quite familiar to marketers. Explicit tests usually take the form of paper-and-pencil surveys in which the consumers might be asked what products they recall seeing in the movie or what types of brands they recognize as having seen in the movie. In contrast, implicit tests are less direct. For the most part, they rely on actual observable behavior. These measures have moved from the observation of different tasks (such as the tracking object in HM's case) to more practical word fragment completion tasks to computerized reaction tests. The distinguishing characteristic of an implicit test is that there is no direct reference to the item being tested.

This distinction between implicit and explicit memory measures is particularly important for marketers because it has been shown that performance on an

implicit memory measure can be uncorrelated or dissociated from performance on an explicit memory test. Indeed, the psychological literature is rampant with examples demonstrating 0 or a negative correlation between implicit and explicit measures (for a review, see Puchinelli, Mast, & Braun, 2001), and these findings have changed the way psychologists believe learning occurs (see Seger, 1994, for a review of implicit learning). This disassociation has been found with “normal” consumers as well, where a person reports no awareness of being influenced, although his or her behavior indicates otherwise (this point is discussed later). Thus far, the usage of these implicit tests in marketing has been limited. The following section presents evidence suggesting why marketers have been reluctant to acknowledge the implicit effects their efforts may be having. We then present research on priming to argue for the use of explicit and implicit measures in gauging the impact of placements on viewers.

CAN THINGS WE ARE UNAWARE OF INFLUENCE US?

Historically, the issue of a marketer influencing behavior without a consumer’s awareness of doing so has been likened to brainwashing. Investigations into the possible effects of implicit memory (though not called that at that time) began with a controversial start in 1957 in a New Jersey suburb. James Vicary flashed “drink Coke” and “eat popcorn” slogans at rapid presentations of 1/3,000 s in 5-s intervals during the movie *Picnic*. He claimed popcorn sales increased by 58% and Coke sales by 18% during his 2-week run because of those messages. In the post-Korean War paranoid world, this finding touched off a national hysteria. The American Psychological Association was quick to refute Vicary’s claim (and there has been question about the validity of his findings because he supplied no verification). They said subliminal advertising was confused, ambiguous, and not as effective as traditional advertising (see Moore, 1980, for a view of how subliminal advertising has been construed by marketers).

Affirmative Evidence From Priming Research

This pronouncement came about a decade too soon. *Priming*, the tendency for a recently presented stimulus to facilitate subsequent judgments or behavior, had not yet been discovered. And research demonstrating the biological foundations for this unique memory system was just being uncovered. In laboratory experiments, the customary way of studying priming (the index of implicit memory) is to expose participants to material (e.g., a list of words, pictures, a passage) in the initial phase. In a later phase, participants are given an ostensibly unrelated task, such as identifying impoverished pictures or fragmented forms of the words. Priming or implicit learning is determined by comparing task performance on items seen earlier (primed) to performance on new (unprimed) items. The typical

finding is that participants will identify the words or pictures better if the items were previously studied, although participants report no knowledge of the prior exposure.

Priming has been found to occur outside the lab setting as well. For instance, consider the “unintentional” plagiarism by ex-Beatle George Harrison. His 1970s hit “My Sweet Lord” sounded much like the 1960s hit “He’s So Fine” by the Chiffons, so much so that the Chiffons took him to court. Harrison admitted that he had heard the song before but felt strongly that his song was his own creation. The court concluded that Harrison was guilty of unintentional copying based on what was in Harrison’s subconscious memory (Schacter, 1996).

Priming occurs when prior information to which we are exposed influences our behavior without our awareness. Several types of priming effects have been observed in the psychological literature: perceptual, conceptual, and emotional priming. Each is discussed in the following sections.

Perceptual Priming. Perceptual priming occurs when we respond to the modality or surface attributes of the prime rather than its meaning. A branch of this research has been called mere-exposure effects. These researchers find that exposure to objects presented for a very short duration (subliminally) leads to preference for those items, even when they are not aware that they have seen them (Borstein, Leone, & Galley, 1987; Zajonc, 1968). In one study, Bornstein et al. showed individuals pictures of polygons for such a brief duration that they were imperceptible to the individual. The researchers found that when individuals were later shown those polygons interspersed with new ones, the individuals preferred the ones seen previously. Schacter (1996) proposed that the perceptual priming effects are due to the PRS (perceptual representation system), which allows us to identify familiar objects and recognize familiar words, even though PRS does not “know” anything about what the words mean or the objects do. To test his hypothesis, Schacter showed people drawings of objects that were either possible, such as things a person could build out of clay (i.e., things a person is familiar with), or impossible, like an Escher drawing, which could not exist in three dimensions (i.e., things a person is unfamiliar with). Schacter flashed the images on a screen, and each subject had to judge whether the drawing was possible or not. He found a priming effect only with the possible (familiar) objects and theorized that the brain cannot create a unified image of an impossible object, so there is no benefit to receiving such a prime. In general, perceptual priming has been observed to be enhanced to the extent that there is perceptual similarity between study and test stimulus forms. As applied to the product placement arena, then, these findings suggest that to assess perceptual priming effects, the testing measurement needs be as perceptually close as possible to the placement; in other words, visual placements are best tested with a measure showing the product’s picture, whereas auditory placements are best tested by having participants hear the product’s name, as in a telephone survey.

Conceptual Priming. Unlike perceptual priming, conceptual priming is based more on semantic memory, in which the meaning of words activates an existing belief and influences behavior. An example is an experiment conducted by John Bargh (Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996), who showed people words either associated with elderly people or words that had no such association. Those exposed to the “old” words walked more slowly down the hall following the experiment than did those who received the neutral words. The words primed the stereotype of elderly people and had an influence on how the subjects behaved. In the area of subliminal advertising, the debate has been whether or not a subliminal implant could invoke a specific behavior, such as buying Coke, or just invoke a more general feeling of being thirsty. The possibility arises that the placement could be doing both: priming the overall desire conceptually, with the perceptual cue triggering a specific choice.

Emotional Priming. Emotional priming experiments use a prime that has an emotional connotation, such as a picture of a smiling or frowning face. The stimulus is presented very briefly (for approximately 5 ms) and is immediately followed by a masking stimulus, which inhibits further stimulus processing—the mask essentially prevents detection. Following a delay, a neutral target stimulus, such as a drawing, is presented. Robert Zajonc and his colleagues (1968, 1980) found that the liking of the target object is determined by whether the subliminal exposure contained a frown or smile. Thus, even a brief emotional context exposure is likely to affect how the product is perceived.

Evidence of Implicit Memory in Consumer Decision Making

Only recently in the marketing literature has the topic of unconscious memory processes and the role these processes play in influencing consumer decision making been studied. Several researchers have reported priming/implicit memory effects—that is, a change in behavior due to a prior exposure without a deliberate attempt to recollect the prior episode. For example, Law, Hawkins, and Craik (1998) report that fictitious advertising claims appeared more veridical to participants on the second viewing, particularly if they were unable to recognize them as previously studied items. Other implicit effects reported in the consumer behavior literature include the *mere-exposure effect* (the formulation of a positive affect towards a brand as a result of a brief exposure; Janiszewski, 1993), the *false familiarity effect* (mistakenly judging a hypothetical brand to be famous after 24 hours; Holden & Vanhuele, 1999), and *emotional context effects* (where a product presented with favorable music is rated higher than when presented with negative music; Gorn, Goldberg, Chattopadhyay, & Litvack, 1991).

If explicit and implicit measures tap in to different forms of memory, then one would expect stochastic independence between participants’ performance on explicit and implicit tests and different experimental manipulations that have a

differential impact on the two. Several marketing researchers have now reported such findings. Janiszewski (1990, 1993) reported positive and reliable effects of exposure on brand evaluations and liking (implicit measures), even when participants failed to recognize having seen the brands (explicit measure), suggesting stochastic independence between the two measures. In the same vein, Shapiro and Krishnan (2001) had participants view print ads of everyday products (e.g., watches, jeans) with fictitious brand names, either under full attention or divided attention conditions (e.g., while listening to a short story). Fifteen minutes or 7 days later, participants either took an explicit recognition test or were required to complete an implicit choice task where no reference was made to the print ads. Performance on the explicit and implicit tests appeared to exhibit stochastic independence: Participants' performance on the recognition test was uncorrelated with their performance on the choice task. Furthermore, although the experimental manipulations (testing delay, attention) were found to significantly impact the explicit measure, they left the implicit measure untouched. These results provide evidence that incidental exposure to advertising or brand names can influence subsequent consumer behavior in a variety of ways, some of which fall outside the consumers' awareness.

PRODUCT PLACEMENTS: IN NEED OF IMPLICIT MEASURES

In a study that is in some ways even more compelling, we demonstrated a double dissociation between explicit and implicit measures, in which performance on explicit and implicit tests responded differentially, and in predictable ways, to experimental manipulations (Law & Braun, 2000). In this study, we examined the effectiveness of product placement by having participants watch one of two excerpts of *Seinfeld* (TV program); containing at least six product placements under the guise of collecting their evaluations of the show. A subset of the placements was central to the plot (e.g., a discussion between Kramer and Elaine's mother about a chocolate éclair), whereas others were more peripheral (such as a box of Tide in a garbage pail). Furthermore, a few of the products were both seen and mentioned, whereas others were either simply seen or only spoken about. Thus, plot centrality and placement modality were the two independent variables in the study. After viewing the *Seinfeld* excerpt, participants completed an implicit choice task and an explicit recognition test. In the implicit choice task, participants were asked to choose a brand from a set of two brand names (where one was a brand present in the *Seinfeld* episode and the other was not present). No reference to the earlier viewing was made. The construction of the explicit recognition test was similar, consisting of previously seen and new brand names, except that in this case participants were instructed to think back to the viewing episode and identify which brands had been present in the video. We expected placement centrality and placement modality would dissociate between explicit and implicit measures of

memory. The results confirmed these expectations: placements that were central to the program were best recalled and recognized though least likely to be chosen. In contrast, placement modality showed an opposite effect on the two measures: seen-only placements showed lower recall and recognition compared with heard-only placements but were chosen most frequently. In other words, the experimental manipulations produced strong double dissociations: Although centrality affected explicit measures and had no impact on the implicit measure, placement modality showed the reverse effect.

One limitation of the Law and Braun (2000) study is that, like other placement research, it relied on existing footage to investigate product placement effects (see Russell, 2002, for an exception). For instance, it was not possible for us to get a *Seinfeld* clip where Pepsi was seen in one version and mentioned in another. And although we can speculate on how the placements should respond based on psychological theory, it has been hard to make definitive conclusions from these data because they are confounded by other uncontrolled factors (such as liking for the actor, strength of the plot, exposure duration). More recently, we replicated and extended these results using more controlled footage (Law, Schimmack, & Braun, 2003). We directed and taped two versions of a 15-min video play where various packaged goods (e.g., cereal, coffee, crackers) were incidentally embedded. Some of the brands were familiar, and others were unfamiliar. Participants were randomly assigned to view one of the two videos, and, either 20 min or a week later, they took either explicit memory tests (recall and recognition) or implicit memory tests (brand choice and preference). Again, the results revealed clear dissociations between the effect of the independent variables brand familiarity and testing delay and the explicit and implicit measures employed. Taken together, these results add to the conclusion that implicit tests of retention measure a form of knowledge (or exposure effects) different from that tapped by standard, explicit tests. More important, these findings confirm that the explicit-implicit distinction is relevant for research on product placement effectiveness.

The question, then, becomes which measure is “right”? As we have argued elsewhere (see Law & Braun, 2000), the answer depends on the goal of the placement: Explicit measures are found to be better predictors of behavior when the decision is consequential and deliberate; implicit measures are better predictors when the behavior is spontaneous (Vargas, von Hippel, & Petty, 2001). Thus, if the marketer’s intent for a placement is to increase brand awareness and demonstrate brand benefits, as was the case for BMW’s placement within *The World Is Not Enough*, explicit measures may be appropriate measures of effectiveness. Similarly, for high-involvement buying decisions, such as a sports car, where the status of having a James Bond car is likely to influence the decision, the consumer’s ability to consciously remember the placement is key, and explicit measures would likely best predict behavior. But for the majority of buying decisions, in which such explicit awareness is not necessary and may even be discounted, implicit measures that come closer to the consumer’s actual behavior are more appropriate. For these

decisions, such as the grabbing of a Coke in the supermarket aisle, consumers' deliberate attempts to search their memory for previously encountered information is highly unlikely (thus, the acknowledgement of a Coke placement within *Seinfeld* is not likely to occur as they hurriedly finish their grocery shopping). As such, implicit measures may be better suited for measuring this type of phenomenon.

There are several ways marketers can gauge the effect a placement has on implicit memory; our consumer buying scenario was an implicit task that came close to the desired behavior, but attitude measures such as those used by Russell (in press) can also indirectly assess placement effects. Response-time software that measures the response latency in product recognition may be another way to get at these more subtle effects on behavior (see Shapiro, MacInnis, Heckler, & Perez, 1999 for an example of another method for studying unconscious perception in marketing).

FACTORS INFLUENCING PRODUCT PLACEMENTS

The company considering buying a product placement has several issues to consider, such as how central the product is to the plot; how the placement appears—visual, auditory, or both; whether it is seen in a positive or negative context; and how to best measure the product category. Based on research into explicit and implicit memory, the following suggestions are made:

- *Product centrality.* Gupta and Lord (1998) found that prominent placements outperform subtle depictions in audience recall. If the manufacturer's goal is conscious recall, centrality to the plot is key. These products are likely to perform well on CinemaScore and other methods employing only explicit memory measures.
- *Modality.* In our study on placements we found it difficult to separate the effects of centrality from modality; typically those products both seen and heard were more central to the plot (Law & Braun, 2000). In general, however, the evidence from the cognitive psychology literature shows that modality tends to have a large effect on perceptual implicit memory tasks (Blaxton, 1989) but little or no effect on explicit memory tasks (Roediger & Blaxton, 1987). In contrast, other research suggests a memory benefit from having both modality presentations: Paivio's (1986) dual processing theory states that two different memory traces will be formed on exposure if a product is both seen and heard. This stronger memory trace is more likely to be expressed on explicit measures of memory. However, if a marketer were faced with a choice between presentation modalities, and the goal was to exert a more subtle influence, visual modality is preferred. We live in a primarily visual world, and our ability to process that type of information is enhanced.

Additionally, because visual information is more available in the environment where consumers make their choices (such as seeing the cereal box they recently saw on *Seinfeld*), research on perceptual priming effects suggests that this modality match is going to favor a visual placement.

- *Emotional context.* A product placement by definition is embedded within an emotional context of the program. This emotional context will transfer over to the brand. Typically, information from a negative context is better recalled, so a product appearing in a negative way will be remembered better than a favorable presentation. However, in this scenario, there is likely to be a dissociation between the explicit and implicit measures when it comes to behavior, where the affect transfer produces an attitude consistent with the program context. Thus, explicit measures may show enhanced memory for the negative context but implicit measures are more effective in predicting how the emotional context influences actual behavior.
- *Product category.* Across a number of studies, performance on implicit tests, relative to explicit tests, has been shown to be resistant to decay (Gibbons, Neaderhiser, & Walker, 2000; Law et al., 2002; Shapiro & Krishnan, 2001). This suggests that for low-involvement purchases where consumers are expected to make brand choices after a delay (such as choosing between brands of sparkling water at the supermarket), the use of implicit rather than explicit measures will be more appropriate.

CONCLUSION

The general thesis in this chapter—that the measurement of placement effectiveness employ both explicit and implicit tests—has been shaped by the accelerating knowledge of the various expressions of human memory. Cognitive psychologists—and, more recently, marketing researchers—are vigorously experimenting with ways to measure and understand how exposure to a stimulus can affect subsequent judgments, emotions, and behavior, with or without awareness. Whereas product placement researchers have placed emphasis primarily on explicit measures, in which consumers are expected to consciously recall the placement, we argue that it may be productive to entertain and systematically explore the possibility that people can be unaware of the placement and its influence. As such, we propose the use of implicit measures as well—indeed, we suggest that these latter types of tests are often more appropriate in the consumer context.

The current framework and the associated literature suggest a number of directions for future research. First, given that marketers view placements as being a more cost-effective alternative to spending on more traditional media, it is important to investigate whether this is indeed the case. On the one hand, Friestad and Wright (1994) have argued that once people are aware that a persuasion attempt is being made, they indulge in mental counterarguing, message rejection, or

message scrutiny. Consumers exposed to traditional forms of marketing communication (e.g., commercials between programs) are generally aware of the persuasive intent, and this awareness probably counters the persuasive impact of these messages. In the case of product placements, however, awareness is likely to be low for most people, suggesting that the latter may be a more persuasive medium. On the other hand, the advertisements have significantly less control over placements and can seek the viewers' attention more compellingly through traditional commercials. Second, using controlled stimuli, it is important to determine whether placement effects will be discernable once program sponsors are clearly identified. Some consumer advocacy groups (such as the Center for Science in the Public Interest) are concerned about cameo brand appearances in TV programs and believe that mandating the identification of product sponsors is a necessary step toward protecting the public interests. As such, it is relevant to examine whether the presence of sponsor identification helps counter placement effects and under what circumstances such disclosures are most effective. Future research should attempt to see address these questions.

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Mental Models for Brand Placement

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The use of brand placement in a movie or television program has been employed by advertisers for more than 50 years as a way of communicating their specific brands to an audience (Babin & Carder, 1996; Sargent et al., 2001). A recent content analysis of 112 hours of prime-time television during the spring of 1997 found that, on average, there were close to 30 brand appearances per hour of prime-time programming (Avery & Ferraro, 2000; Ferraro & Avery, 2000). Apparently, brand placement is perceived as an effective mechanism for reaching audiences.

Unfortunately, it is difficult to ascertain the effectiveness of brand placement because much of the data on brand placement are proprietary. However, many authors cite the effectiveness of Hershey's placement of Reese's Pieces in the movie *E. T.* as the classic example of the potential effectiveness of brand placement (Babin & Carder, 1996; Gupta & Lord, 1998; Karrh, 1998; Ong & Meri, 1994). The consumption of Reese's Pieces increased by 67% within a few months of audience's witnessing a small alien being drawn into a house because a boy left a trail of Reese's Pieces from the alien's hiding place to the boy's house. Despite the resounding success of the Reese's Pieces story, the empirical research on brand placement is less encouraging, suggesting that the practice may not be as effective at increasing sales as some would like to believe (Karrh, 1998; McCarty, this volume).

Of course, increasing sales is not the only goal of brand placement. Brand placement is also used to increase the audience's familiarity with the brand so that

consumers are more likely to remember the brand (d'Astous & Chartier, 2000). The empirical research on this aspect of brand placement has focused on viewers' memory for the brands placed within a movie or television show. This research, which we later discuss, shows a complex relation between brand placement and memory for the brand. No single theory or model has been able to explain this complicated relation.

In this chapter, we present an approach to understanding when brand placements are effective for remembering the brand. We argue that when individuals watch a movie or a television program, their primary focus is on comprehending the story and that an adequate understanding of brand placement requires an understanding of how people comprehend the programming. Based on the research on text comprehension, we know that people construct mental models of a story when attempting to comprehend it (e.g., Wyer & Radvansky, 1999). Thus, in this chapter, we propose a mental models approach to understanding the effects of brand placement on memory for, and attitude toward, the brand. This approach, along with research on the relationship between memory and judgments, provides the foundation for predicting when brand placements will be successful. To preview, we begin this chapter by reviewing the research on brand placement, and then we discuss the mental models approach, including a recent test of the landscape model of text comprehension using video media rather than the usual text media. We conclude by discussing the implications of the mental models approach for understanding when brand placement will be effective.

WHAT ARE THE EFFECTS OF BRAND PLACEMENT?

Why is brand placement used? Because, as already discussed, it is believed to be effective, but, more specifically, brand placement has a number of advantages compared with traditional advertising, such as 15- or 30-s commercials. First, brand placement probably overcomes the problem of zapping (Avery & Ferraro 2000; d'Astous & Chartier, 2000). Though it is easy to run to the kitchen for a beer during a commercial break, a person is less likely to run to the kitchen when Reese's Pieces are being placed on the ground because the viewer presumably wants to watch the movie (Babin & Carder, 1996; d'Astous & Chartier, 2000). Second, brand placements are often associated with well-known actors or actresses, and, as a result, the placement can work as a celebrity endorsement (Avery & Ferraro, 2000). For example, in a study using focus groups, DeLorme and Reid (1999) found that audiences who are young and who admire a particular movie actor or actress are more likely to associate the brand with the actor or actress and to want to buy the product. Likewise, research has shown that when the main actor in a movie uses a product, the viewers' memory for the brand is enhanced, and they also have a slightly more positive evaluation of the product than if the actor had not used the product (d'Astous & Chartier, 2000). Third, brand placement allows

for advertisers to target very specific audiences because the demographics of who attends which kinds of movies are well understood by Hollywood (Nebenzahl & Secunda, 1993). Fourth, brand placement has a longer life than does typical advertisement (Brennan, Dubas, & Babin, 1999; d'Astous & Chartier, 2000). With the release of the 20th anniversary *E. T.*, Hershey's placement of Reese's Pieces may continue to be effective 20 years after the initial placement. Furthermore, to the extent that people purchase the *E. T.* videotape or DVD, the placement's life is extended even further. Fifth, commercials are regulated as a type of commercial speech. However, there is a fair amount of ambiguity concerning brand placements. Is brand placement commercial speech or does it afford the same protections that the movie is provided? These questions have not been decided by the courts, so brand placements currently enjoy more freedom than more traditional commercial speech (Avery & Ferraro, 2000). Sixth, audiences seem to have positive attitudes toward brand placements (Nebenzahl & Secunda, 1993). Indeed, audiences have indicated that brand placements enhance the viewing experience because they make the movie more realistic (Avery & Ferraro, 2000). Finally, audiences probably have less-critical responses to brand placements than they do to standard commercials (Babin & Carder, 1996). When people know that someone is trying to persuade them, they tend to react more critically to a message (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986). However, when brand placement occurs in a show viewers are watching, they probably do not perceive the placement as persuasive in nature and are less likely to respond critically to the placement (Babin & Carder, 1996).

Influence of Brand Placement on Memory and Evaluations

With the aforementioned advantages of brand placement, the increase in sales of a brand after the success of movie or television program would almost seem assured (Sargent et al., 2001). However, brand placement does not always guarantee success, even though the advertisers may invest an enormous amount of money for the expense of placing their product on the specific movie or television program. Moreover, considering the increasing number of brand placements in movies and television programs, there has been little research regarding its effectiveness (Karrh, 1998; Ong & Meri, 1994). Instead, most of the research on brand placement has focused on memory for the placement.

The research on memory for brand placement generally finds that memory is improved for a brand that is placed within a movie compared with the same brand that is not placed within a movie (Karrh, 1998). However, the early research on the effect of brand placement on brand memory was rather mixed (Babin & Carder, 1996; Ong & Meri, 1994). For example, Ong and Meri (1994) found no improvement in memory for some brand placements and remarkably large improvements in memory for other brand placements. In particular, 77% of viewers recalled seeing Coke while watching the movie *Falling Down*, but only 18% recalled seeing Hamm's Beer in the same movie (Ong & Meri, 1994).

These early findings shifted the research question to the factors that moderate the effect of brand placement on brand memory. As a result, more recent research has focused on the nature of the placement and whether it moderates the effectiveness of the brand placement on later memory for the brand. This research has considered whether the placement was creative (background shot) versus on-set (foreground) and also the product's size or position on the screen. The basic finding of this research is that placements that are more visually prominent tend to result in greater memory for the brand than do less-prominent placements (Brennan, Dubas, & Babin, 1999; d'Astous & Chartier, 2000; Gupta & Lord, 1998; Law & Braun, 2000). As we later discuss, this makes sense within a mental models perspective because information that is prominent is more likely to be noticed and encoded into one's mental model of the story. Unfortunately, what has not been explored is the degree to which the brand is integral to the story. We argue that the functions a brand can serve within a story should influence how much a product is encoded into one's mental model of a story.

A recent study shows an additional effect of brand placement on memory for the brand. Specifically, Law and Braun (2000) found that brand placement not only influenced explicit measures of memory, such as recognition and recall tasks, but it also influenced implicit measures of memory. In their study, Law and Braun had participants imagine that they were helping a friend purchase items for the friend's new apartment. Participants were more likely to choose items for the friend's new apartment that had appeared in a recently watched episode of *Seinfeld*, compared with control items that did not appear in the episode. The results suggest that brand placement can prime the brand in memory, which could influence later judgments or behaviors related to that brand (see Roskos-Ewoldsen, Klinger, & Roskos-Ewoldsen, in press, or Roskos-Ewoldsen, Roskos-Ewoldsen, & Carpentier, 2002, for a discussion of media priming).

Another focus of research on brand placement has been on the effectiveness of brand placement on brand evaluations. The results of this line of research are clear. With few exceptions, this research suggests that brand placements have little or no effect on the evaluation of the brand or on purchase intentions (Babin & Carder, 1996; Karrh, 1998; Ong & Meri, 1994). These results are puzzling, given that prominent placements improve memory for the brand. A partial answer for the ineffectiveness of brand placement on attitudes toward the brand may be found in the results of DeLorme and Reid's (1999) focus group study. Their participants indicated that they were more likely to notice brand placements if the brand was one that they already like and use. This finding is consistent with the research showing that people are more likely to attend to those items in their environment toward which they have accessible attitudes (Fazio, Roskos-Ewoldsen, & Powell, 1994; Roskos-Ewoldsen, 1997; Roskos-Ewoldsen & Fazio, 1992). If people already have strong attitudes toward the brand, which indicates that they already have a consolidated attitude stored in memory, their attitude is unlikely to change (Roskos-Ewoldsen, 1997; Roskos-Ewoldsen & Fazio, 1997). Thus, the brand's

placement may serve to reinforce an already existing attitude, but it is not going to result in a more positive evaluation of the brand or stronger intentions to purchase it.

The Ethics of Brand Placement

Within the literature concerning brand and product placement, one of the issues that has received extensive coverage concerns the ethics of certain brands or products within movies and television shows. Specifically, is it ethical to place cigarette brands (prior to the voluntary ban on brand placement by the cigarette industry in 1990) or cigarettes as a product (after the ban in 1990) in movies if the placement may influence adolescents to start smoking?¹ Although the ethical issues are beyond the scope of this chapter, we believe that the research in this area deserves special attention because it claims some of the strongest effects of brand and product placement.

Several content analyses of television and movies suggest that cigarettes appear in movies at a much higher rate than they should, given the prevalence of smoking in the general population (Christenson, Henriksen, & Roberts, 2000; Diener, 1993; Everett, Schnuth, & Tribble, 1998; Hazan, Lipton, & Glantz, 1994; Roberts, Henriksen, & Christenson, 1999; Sargent et al., 2001; Stockwell & Glantz, 1997). In a content analysis of four episodes of 42 of the most popular television shows among adolescents and adults in the fall of 1998, Christenson et al. (2000) found that approximately 22% of all television episodes contained either references to smoking or smoking behavior, though smoking occurred more often in shows aimed at adults than in shows aimed at adolescents. In addition, in a content analysis of 200 movies from 1996 and 1997, Roberts et al. (1999) found that 89% of all movies included references to smoking or smoking behavior, and 17% of the characters who appeared to be under the age of 18 smoked. Clearly, cigarettes and other tobacco products are prevalent in movies and television.

Some researchers have argued that the prevalence of smoking and cigarettes in movies and on television is responsible, at least in part, for adolescents' smoking initiation (Basil, 1997; Chapman & Davis, 1997; Stockwell & Glantz, 1997). Indeed, several studies suggest that the presence of cigarettes might influence whether adolescents start smoking. For example, Distefan, Gilpin, Sargent, and Pierce (1999) found evidence suggesting that adolescents who are susceptible to smoking initiation are also more likely to like movie stars who smoke both on and off the screen. Distefan et al. (1999) interpreted this result as indicating that teenagers become susceptible to smoking initiation because the actors or actresses they like smoked. However, this interpretation should be treated with caution.

¹ The tobacco industry voluntarily stopped paying for brand placement in movies in 1990. However, cigarettes continue to be used in movies at approximately the same rate as before the ban for a number of reasons, including the smoking status of the actor or actress, the director's belief that smoking makes the film more realistic or fits with the characters persona, and so forth (Shields, Carol, Balbach, & McGee, 1999).

Given the correlational nature of the study, it is difficult to know whether it is the portrayals of smoking that influence an adolescent to think about smoking, or whether adolescents who are thinking about smoking are more likely to notice and like stars who smoke. In addition, the relationship between being at risk for smoking and liking movie stars who smoke on or off screen is weak ($r < .09$) and not statistically significant.² Finally, the measure of being at risk for smoking that Distefan et al. (1999) used overestimates the extent to which adolescents actually become smokers. Pierce, Choi, Gilpin, Farkas, and Merritt (1996), using the same measure of susceptibility to smoking, found that only 13% of adolescents who were susceptible in 1989 were smokers in 1993.³

Two experimental studies looking at the effect of smoking in movies have also been cited as indicating that portrayals in movies influence smoking initiation. Hines, Saris, and Throckmorton-Belzer (2000) found that male regular and occasional smokers who watched film clips that included smoking indicated a stronger desire to smoke a cigarette than those who watched a clip that did not include smoking. In addition, when they watched a clip that contained smoking, occasional and regular smokers rated their likelihood of smoking in the future higher than did those who watched a clip that did not contain smoking. However, there was no effect of smoking in the film clip on nonsmokers' ratings of their likelihood of smoking in the future, and female characters who smoked were consistently rated more negatively than when the same characters were portrayed as not smoking.⁴

In the second experimental study, Gibson and Maurer (2000) had participants watch two different clips from the movie *Die Hard*. In one clip, Bruce Willis smokes, and in the second clip he does not smoke. Nonsmokers who were low in need for cognition rated themselves as more likely to become friends with a person who smokes after viewing the clip in which Bruce Willis smoked than did those who watched the clip in which he did not smoke. However, there was no effect of the presence of smoking in the movie clip on general attitudes toward smoking or on willingness to smoke in the future. There were no effects of the clip for nonsmokers who were high in need for cognition.

²The correlation was calculated using the frequencies that the authors provided in Table 5 (Distefan et al., 1999).

³This percentage is extrapolated from Table 2 in Pierce, Choi, Gilpin, Farkas, and Merritt (1996, p. 357).

⁴Hines, Saris, and Throckmorton-Belzer (2000) argued that their results did show that nonsmokers rated themselves as more likely to smoke after watching a clip that contained smoking than when the clip did not contain smoking because there was a significant main effect of experimental condition. However, inspection of the means for nonsmokers (Figure 4, p. 2261) shows that there was no effect of whether the characters in the film clip smoked or did not smoke on nonsmokers' likelihood of smoking in the future. The significant main effect was a result of the interaction between smoking status and experimental condition and does not mean that all participants were affected by the experimental manipulation. Unfortunately, the authors did not conduct post hoc tests to determine which means were significantly different from each other.

One of the main problems with discussions of the ethical aspects of product placement in movies or on television is that scholars tend not to consider the context of product use in a movie or television program. Yet one would think that how smoking is portrayed should influence the effect the depiction of smoking has on the audience. In other words, the context in which the smoking occurs should influence the audience's reaction to the smoking. Although most portrayals of smoking on television and in movies are neutral, there are more negative than positive portrayals. Of television episodes that contained smoking, 23% involved negative statements about smoking, compared with just 13% that involved positive statements. In movies, antagonists are more likely to smoke (38%) than protagonists (22%), and negative statements about smoking occur in 22% of movies, whereas only 7% include positive statements about smoking (Christenson et al., 2000; Roberts et al., 1999). Given this context, it is curious that we assume that smoking portrayals would lead to more smoking, not less.

To summarize, the extant research on the influence of the portrayal of smoking on television or in movies is consistent with the more generic research on brand placements. Both literatures indicate that brand or product placements have no influence on attitudes toward the brand or product. Further, brand placements seem to have no influence on behavior related to the brand product, unless one is already a smoker.

MENTAL MODELS AND THE MEDIA

When people watch television programs or movies, there are many different goals they may have, such as being entertained, informed, or distracted from problems at home or at work. However, a basic goal that all viewers of the media have is to have a coherent understanding of what they are watching. To accomplish this, viewers construct mental representations of the movie as the movie unfolds. This representation includes information about the characters and situations within the movie and prior expectations based on knowledge about the genre of movies or the actors and actresses starring in the movie. This combination of information provides the basis for understanding the movie as it unfolds and for predicting future events in the movie. Unfortunately, little research has focused on how people create a coherent understanding of what they are watching (but see Livingstone, 1987, 1989, 1990). This focus on the understanding—or coherence—of a movie, and on the cognitive representation that undergirds it, is central to the mental models approach. In our opinion, understanding personal discourse, the media, or the world in general requires constructing a coherent mental model to represent the event. To the extent that a person can construct such a model, the person is said to understand the event (Halford, 1993; Wyer & Radvansky, 1999). We argue that understanding the effects of product placements within television and movies requires an understanding of how people create coherent understandings of movies or television shows.

The mental models approach reflects the observation that thinking typically occurs within and about situations (Garnham, 1997). Mental models are the cognitive representations of (a) situations in real, hypothetical, or imaginary worlds, including space and time; (b) entities found in the situation and the states those entities are in; (c) interrelationships between the various entities and the situation, including causality and intentionality; and (d) events that occur in that situation (Garnham, 1997; Johnson-Laird, 1983; Radvansky & Zacks, 1997; Wyer & Radvansky, 1999; Zwaan & Radvansky, 1998). Mental models are distinct from network models of memory, but the entities and events within a mental model are hypothesized to be linked to relevant representations within a semantic network (Radvansky & Zacks, 1997; Wyer & Radvansky, 1999). In other words, mental models are hypothesized to exist alongside, as well as coupled with, the semantic networks that are hypothesized by network models of memory.

van Dijk (1998) argues that mental models involve the merger of semantic memory (knowledge of the world) and episodic memory (memory for our past experiences). However, this argument can be misleading. In particular, it might give the impression that mental models involve only the representation of past situations we have personally experienced (what van Dijk refers to as experience mental models). However, when defining mental models as cognitive representations of situations, the term *situation* is used very broadly. For example, we can have mental models of ownership, which include the interrelationships of owners and the objects that are owned (Radvansky & Zacks, 1997). Likewise, mental models can be used in a reasoning task to represent the possible worlds in which the premises of an argument are true and to manipulate the possible worlds to discover what may occur (Johnson-Laird, 1983).

The mental models approach has been used to understand a number of different phenomena, including reasoning and problem solving (Greeno, 1984; Johnson-Laird, 1983), language processing (Garnham, 1997), children's understanding of the world (Halford, 1993), text comprehension and discourse (Graesser, Singer, & Trabasso, 1994; Morrow, Greenspan, & Bower, 1987; van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983; Zwaan & Radvansky, 1998), children's implicit theories of physics (Gentner & Gentner, 1983), spatial cognition (Radvansky, Spieler, & Zacks, 1993), media priming (Roskos-Ewoldsen et al., 2002), political commercials (Biocca, 1991), and ideology (van Dijk, 1998). We believe that they also can be used to understand the influence of brand placements in movies and on television on people's memory for and attitudes about the brand.

To begin at a broader level, the mental models approach provides a flexible framework for how we understand the media. First, mental models can exist at many levels of abstraction (Johnson-Laird, 1983). If you are a reader of mysteries, you might have a mental model for Agatha Christie novels, more specific mental models for her Poirot and Miss Marple mysteries, and maybe even more specific mental models for specific stories from the Poirot or Miss Marple series. Brand placements should be less likely to be represented in more abstract mental models,

unless the brand is an integral part of the situation. Second, new information can be integrated into existing mental models (Wyer & Radvansky, 1999). A person's mental model of Shrewsbury, the setting for Ellis Peters' Brother Cadfael mysteries, could be updated as more information is provided about Shrewsbury and the abbey where Brother Cadfael lives. Similarly, rumination about the content of a mental model would result in updating the mental model (Zwaan & Radvansky, 1998). For example, if a brand's first placement is subtle (i.e., not integral to the story), it is not likely to be represented in one's mental model. However, a subsequent placement that is more prominent, and integral to the story, is much more likely to be included in the mental model, and the mental model may be updated further to include the initial, more subtle placement. Third, mental models can represent both static situations, such as a mental model of the town of Shrewsbury (a *state-of-affairs model*; Radvansky & Zacks, 1997), and dynamic situations, such as a mental model of a specific mystery that is occurring at the abbey (a *course-of-event model*; Radvansky & Zacks, 1997).

Several lines of research on mental models corroborate their usefulness for understanding how we understand the media. Research has found that the mix of linguistic and pictorial information improves the construction of mental models (Glenberg & Langston, 1992; Wyer & Radvansky, 1999). For this reason, the media should be particularly effective at influencing the construction of mental models. Consistent with this, Gupta and Lord (1998) found that verbal references to a brand did not improve memory over simple visual placements of a brand in a movie. Research has also shown that previously created mental models will influence how new information is interpreted and that they will influence the mental model that is constructed to understand the current event (Radvansky & Zacks, 1997; Wyer & Radvansky, 1999). In terms of television shows, mental models allow us to understand information across scenes of the program and across episodes of a series (Zwaan & Radvansky, 1998). Furthermore, the mental model that one constructs of a show will drive the type of inferences one draws about the show (see Graesser et al., 1994). Finally, as already discussed, mental models can vary in their degree of abstraction, so frequent viewers of a particular genre should have richer abstract mental models appropriate for understanding the nuances of that genre. Indeed, research has found that the mental models people construct are dependent on the genre of the story they are reading (Zwaan, 1994). Thus, genre differences found in media studies may well reflect the types of mental models people construct of the media event.

The mental models approach also provides a framework for understanding the effects of media on our perceptions and behavior. For example, Segrin and Nabi (2002) recently found that people who watch romantic TV programming have more idealistic expectations about marriage than people who do not watch romantic programs. We argue that viewing this genre of TV shows and movies resulted in the creation of mental models that incorporated the idealistic images of marriage in the media. In other words, we argue that our expectations concerning

marriage are a result of our mental models of marriage, which are influenced, at least in part, by the genre of TV that we watch. Wyer and Radvansky (1999) provide another example. They argued that the influence of the media on perceptions of a “mean world” (see Gerbner et al., 1977) may result from one’s use of mental models that were constructed from watching violent media when attempting to understand the social world. From our perspective, given the amount of violence on TV, it is likely that heavy viewers of TV construct abstract mental models that incorporate violence. Further, the abstractness of the mental model would increase the likelihood of its use to understand situations beyond the media. More generally, we believe that mental models can be used to explain media effects such as cultivation and the influence of the media on perceptions of reality.

We have used the mental models approach to investigate how a movie is understood (Roskos-Ewoldsen, Roskos-Ewoldsen, Yang, Crawford, & Choi, 2002). When watching a movie, generating a coherent understanding of that movie can be difficult because of limitations in both attentional resources and short-term memory. Indeed, sometimes movies are designed to take advantage of these limitations to create ambiguity. Consider the movie *Falling Down*. In the movie, Michael Douglas plays a defense engineer (Defens) who has been fired from his job. The movie begins with him stuck in a traffic jam near downtown Los Angeles. He abandons his car and proceeds to start walking home. Everyone he encounters, mostly stereotypic characters such as a threatening ghetto gang, a rude convenience store owner, and a White supremacist, all upset him. He reacts with increasing violence. As he walks across L.A., he calls his ex-wife, telling her that he is coming home to see his daughter for her birthday. She is clearly frightened by the phone call, indicating that there is more to the situation. By the end of the movie, viewers are convinced that Defens is insane.

There are three interpretations of the movie, based on the movie cover and comments about the movie on the Internet. One interpretation portrays Defens as an average man who is fighting back against an insane society (hero interpretation). A second interpretation is that the movie is a comedy about a man dealing with exaggerated everyday pressures (comedy interpretation). The third interpretation is that the movie is about a man on the edge of insanity who finally goes over the edge because of the pressures from society (insane interpretation).

The ambiguity in the film is created, at least in part, because the director takes advantage of the viewers’ short-term memory limitations. Defens could be interpreted as a caring father because he calls home on his daughter’s birthday to tell his wife he’s coming home for the party. However, Defens had just trashed a corner grocery store because the owner made him buy a Coke to get change for the phone call, but charged too much for the can of Coke, not leaving enough change for the call. This viewer has two conflicting impressions of Defens. Because of limitations in short-term memory, the viewer may focus on the caring aspect, attributing the ex-wife’s behavior to something else. In this case, the mental model would be congruent with the hero interpretation. On the other hand, the viewer may focus

on the ex-wife's frightened appearance. In this case, the mental model would be congruent with the insane interpretation.

In our investigation of people's mental models of this movie (Roskos-Ewoldsen, Roskos-Ewoldsen, Yang et al., 2002), we had 89 participants watch the movie. At the end of the movie, we had them rate the similarities of the main characters. That is, for every pair of characters, participants rated their similarity on an 11-point scale. We converted the similarity ratings to dissimilarity ratings and then submitted the dissimilarity ratings to a multidimensional scaling analysis. The solution is a depiction in a multidimensional space of participants' perceptions of the characters. We viewed this solution as a snapshot of the participants' mental model of the movie. After the similarity ratings, participants rated on an 11-point scale their acceptance of each of the interpretations. Almost everyone thought that Defens was insane. However, about half of the participants thought that he also was a hero, whereas the other half did not. We looked at the multidimensional scaling solution separately for those who thought of Defens a hero and those who did not. Briefly, the people who considered Defens a hero had a different mental model of the movie than those who did not endorse this interpretation. Although this research is preliminary, we believe that it merits further attention.

Landscape Model of Text Comprehension

Within the broader mental models approach, we have been working with the landscape model (van den Broek, Risdén, Fletcher, & Thurlow, 1996; van den Broek, Young, Tzeng, & Linderholm, 1999). As with the more general mental models framework, the landscape model is concerned with how people generate a coherent understanding of a story. The landscape model gets its name from the observation that information is being activated at various levels and that the activation dissipates across time. If one were to construct a matrix of the concepts relevant to the movie and the scenes in the movie, one would have a landscape of activations. This landscape forms the basis for the representation of the story's mental model in memory.

We prefer the landscape model to other models because it focuses on coherence by looking at the relationship between the online processing of a story and the memorial representation of that story. Other models have a more limited focus. These other models use methodologies that tap whether participants make one or two inferences during the reading of a text. Rather than explaining a limited number of inferences that are made while reading the text, the landscape model focuses more on the memorial representation that results from reading a text. By looking at participants' memory for the text, the landscape model takes advantage of the well-established finding that greater levels of activation of a particular concept result in greater memory for that concept. Thus, by using the theory's predictions for how active various concepts are in working memory, one can test whether those concepts are indeed more likely to be recalled when participants are asked to recall a story.

The landscape model assumes that there are four general sources of activation of concepts while attending to a story (van den Broek et al., 1996; van den Broek et al., 1999). First, the immediate environment will activate concepts in memory. Specifically, concepts within the current sentence (for a book) or scene (for a movie) will be activated. Second, because activation dissipates across time (Higgins, Bargh, & Lombardi, 1985), concepts from the immediately proceeding sentence or scene should still be activated, albeit at a lower level of activation. Furthermore, concepts from previous scenes are hypothesized to have higher levels of activation if they were the focal point of the previous scene, if they were related to active goals of the protagonists or antagonists in the previous scene, or if they involved events that were antecedents to some subsequent event. Third, concepts from earlier in the story may be reactivated because they are necessary for maintaining the coherence of the story. Fourth, world knowledge necessary for understanding the story will be activated.

Clearly, not all information that is activated in memory is activated at the same level. The landscape model assumes that information that is explicitly mentioned or is visually central to the scene will receive the highest level of activation in memory. For example, when watching the scene in *Falling Down* where Defens trashes a corner grocery store, Defens would be activated at a higher level overall than the can of Coke he ultimately buys because Defens is more central to the story than the can of Coke is. However, within this sequence, Defens holds a can of Coke to his forehead to cool down. In this specific scene, Coke should be as activated as Defens. Concepts with the next-highest level of activation are those that are required to maintain the coherence of the story. During the grocery store scene, the reason that Defens went into the store—because he needed change to make a phone call—should be activated in memory because it makes the scene coherent. At the next level of activation are concepts that enable actions to occur (enablers). The can of Coke is an enabler in the grocery store because the shopkeeper will not give Defens change, forcing him to buy a can of Coke to obtain change. Finally, concepts with the lowest level of activation involve background knowledge that is not tied to making the story coherent but is nonetheless activated because of associative linkages in memory.

For these reasons, the landscape model predicts that the brand Coke is likely to be recalled from the movie *Falling Down*. As a recap, first, Coke is visually salient in several scenes, such as when Defens uses a can of Coke to cool his forehead. Later in the movie, Coke is again prominently featured because Defens is seen drinking the Coke as he walks through what appears to be a park. Further, in the grocery store scene, the can of Coke is an enabler because it allows Defens to attempt to get change to make a phone call. In addition, the excessive cost of the Coke provides a coherent explanation for Defens's trashing of the grocery store. Finally, Coke is seen on billboards and in restaurants throughout the movie. Thus, Coke is activated a number of times, and the levels of activation should be high because of the various functions that Coke serves in the movie. Interestingly, Ong and Meri (1994) found that 77% of the people they interviewed as they exited

the movie *Falling Down* recalled seeing Coke in the movie. This level of recall is substantially higher than for any other product in the movie.

Testing the Landscape Model With Video Stimuli

The landscape model has been tested with text-based stories (van den Broek et al., 1996; van den Broek et al., 1999). It does an excellent job of accounting for participants' memory for a text-based story. Indeed, the landscape model does a better job of predicting participants' memory for text than any existing model of text comprehension (van den Broek & Gustafson, 1999). However, the stories used to test the model were simple short stories. For example, one story about a knight and a dragon is 13 sentences long and includes 26 concepts. We were curious how well the landscape model would do with more complex stories, such as those found in many movies. The addition of video adds a level of complexity to the model because both the text (dialogue) and the visual elements of the story can activate concepts and influence one's mental model of the story.

We tested the landscape model using a short clip (2 m 17 s) from the fifth episode of an animated series called *Cowboy Bebop*, which has 26 episodes. Each episode is about 30 min long. The series recounts the story of three bounty hunters in a futuristic period. This particular clip began with shots of spaceships flying through space. Then it focused on a meeting between two well-dressed crime bosses and their guards, who are striking an agreement to end the conflicts between their two gangs. After the meeting, one of the crime bosses leaves in his spaceship. As he takes off, the ship explodes. Then an assassin enters the apartment of the other crime boss and kills him and his guards.

To test the landscape model, we first had to break down the story into coherent units of meaning (i.e., segments). With a text-based story, the units of meaning typically correspond to sentences. With a movie, breaking the story down into units of meaning is more difficult because the visual scenes (i.e., camera shots) and dialogue interact to create the units of meaning. For example, a single sentence of dialog may correspond to a single camera shot, or it may have several camera shots. Conversely, several sentences of dialog may occur within a single camera shot. In our case, the video clip was divided into 23 segments based on the meaningful change of the story. Four judges familiar with the landscape model agreed on these segments. These same judges identified 89 concepts, including visual and verbal concepts, across the 23 segments of the clip.

The next step was to determine the theoretically derived activation weights for each of the 89 concepts. To accomplish this, we followed the procedures outlined by van den Broek et al. (1996).⁵ Two trained judges, who were blind to the

⁵The activation weights could also be determined empirically, which would provide a better fit between the predictions of the model and recall data. However, we decided to use van den Broek, Risdén, Fletcher, and Thurlow's (1996) procedure to more directly compare our test of the model with their reported test.

experimental hypothesis, coded the level of activation of the 89 concepts, using a 5-point scale, for each segment. A concept was assigned a score of 5 if it was either explicitly mentioned in the dialogue or was a central feature of the visual scene for that idea unit. A concept was assigned a score of 4 if it aided in creating a coherent understanding of the unit of meaning or was causally related to what was occurring. A concept that acted as an enabler was assigned a value of 3. As an example, when the second crime boss is murdered, the sword that is used to cut his throat is an enabler for the murder. During that scene, *sword* was assigned an activation of 3. Finally, a concept that could be inferred from the scene or dialog was assigned a value of 2. For example, the concept *Mafia* might be activated in one of the earlier scenes involving one of the crime bosses cutting his thumb and using it to sign a contract while the other crime boss watched. In addition to these assignments, the landscape model assumes that the activation of a concept will dissipate across subsequent segments if it is not reinstated. Thus, those concepts that were not reactivated in the next idea unit were assigned a value that was half of their value from the previous idea unit. The activation level of these concepts was reduced to 0 during the next idea unit. The intercoder reliability for the two judges was 86% overall. The result of this coding was a theoretically driven 89 (concepts) \times 23 (segments) matrix of activation values, which constitutes the landscape of activations for the video clip (Table 5.1).

Next, we compared this theoretically driven activation landscape to an empirically derived activation landscape. To develop the empirically derived landscape, 15 students were recruited from basic communication classes at the University of Alabama. None of the participants had ever watched the animated series *Cowboy Bebop*. The research participants watched the same 23 segments that the two trained judges had watched. After viewing each segment, the participants rated how much the segment made them think of each concept, using an 11-point scale (0 = *not at all* to 10 = *very much*).

To determine the level of agreement between the theoretically and empirically driven activations, we first calculated the reliability among the participants' ratings from the empirically driven activations. For the 15 participants, Cronbach's alpha was calculated across all of the concepts for each of the 23 segments. The reliability of the participants' ratings, averaged across the segments, was .77, which suggests that the participants generally agreed on the degree of activation of the concepts. Given this level of agreement, it was possible to test the validity of the model's predictions concerning the levels of activation. Specifically, we calculated the correlation between the theoretically derived activation from the trained judges and the perceived degree of activation from the participants' ratings (van den Broek et al., 1996). The correlation between theoretical activations and the average activations from the student participants was .66. When evaluating the model's prediction, it is important to remember that the reliability of the participants' ratings (.77) serves as an upper limit on the correlation between the model's predictions and the participants' ratings. At best, the model could account for 59% ($.77^2$) of the variance in the participants' ratings. Thus, the model's accounting for 44% of

TABLE 5.1
Activation of Concepts in the Short Animated Clip From *Cowboy Bebop* (Partial List of Concepts)

<i>Concepts</i>	<i>Segments</i>																							<i>Total Activation</i>
	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>	<i>6</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>8</i>	<i>9</i>	<i>10</i>	<i>11</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>13</i>	<i>14</i>	<i>15</i>	<i>16</i>	<i>17</i>	<i>18</i>	<i>19</i>	<i>20</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>22</i>	<i>23</i>	
Space ship	5	3	5	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	5	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	32.0
Fly	5	3	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	4	5	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	27.5
Ring-shaped gates	5	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7.5
Planet Surface	5	5	2.5	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	13.5
City	0	5	5	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	5	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	28.5
Plateau	0	5	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7.5
Planet	5	3	1.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	9.5
Deck	0	0	5	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	15.5
Building	0	0	0	5	2.5	0	0	0	0	2	3	2	1	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	5	2.5	26.0
Moving Clouds	0	0	0	5	2.5	2	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	17.5
Windows	0	0	0	5	2.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	7.5
Blood	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	5	5	2.5	0	5	3	2	24.5
Dripping on floor	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	3	1.5	9.5
Men standing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2.5	7.5
Spike (a character)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2.5	7.5
Not do this	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2.5	7.5
Bird man smiles	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	5	2.5	12.5
Black feathers	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2.5	0	0	0	0	5	2.5	0	15
Cawing	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	5	2.5	5	5	2.5	0	5	5	5	35.5

the variance is an encouraging result. So far in our study, the landscape model had done a very good job of predicting the empirically derived activation levels of the various concepts in the story, despite the increase in the complexity of the story and the addition of a visual element.

The final step in testing the model involved the model's hypothesis that the activation of a concept while watching the animated clip contributes to the formation of a stable memorial representation of the story (van den Broek et al., 1996). To test how well the model predicted memory for the story, 14 research participants from the same participant pool watched the same clip from *Cowboy Bebop*. However, the clip was shown in its entirety, rather than in 23 segments. After watching the clip, the participants completed several measures of visual and verbal working memory as a distracter task (10 min in length) and then completed a free recall test. In the free recall test, participants wrote down everything they could remember from the video clip they watched. For each participant, two trained coders decided whether the participant had recalled each of the 89 concepts. From this we derived the number of participants who recalled each concept. This served as our dependent variable. From the theoretically derived activations, we calculated the number of segments (out of 23) in which a concept had been activated. We also calculated the total activation of each concept by adding together its activation levels across all 23 segments. These two variables served as our independent variables. A regression analysis found that the number of segments in which each of the concepts was activated and the total level of activation of each concept (node strength) together accounted for 19% of the variance in participants' recall of the story ($R = .44$).

Based on these results, we are confident that the landscape model can be used to understand how people construct mental representations of movies or television shows. In addition, the model does a moderately good job of predicting those factors that will be recalled from the movie or television show. Clearly, there is more work to be done from this aspect.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE LANDSCAPE MODEL FOR PRODUCT PLACEMENT

Watching a movie or television show involves, at its most basic level, building a representation of what is occurring in the show. Based on previous research on text comprehension, we have argued elsewhere that comprehension of media shows involves the construction of mental models (Roskos-Ewoldsen, Roskos-Ewoldsen, Yang et al., 2002). However, mental models in general, and the landscape model in particular, seem far removed from the study of the influence of brand and product placements in movies and television. Yet we feel that to understand the influence of brand placements on viewers' memory for the brand, understanding how the viewer comprehends the show is critical. It is through this comprehension process that the mental representation of the movie or television show is created. Further,

the mental representation of the movie or television show is going to determine whether the brand placement is going to be recalled or not.

We think there are three important implications of the research on the landscape model. First, the landscape model clearly specifies the likelihood that a brand placement will be recalled at a later time. The greater the activation of the brand while viewing the movie, the greater the likelihood that the brand will be recalled in the future. Simply presenting the brand a number of times within the movie increases the likelihood that it will receive some level of activation, but the level of activation will be minimal, and, consequently, later recall of the brand will be unlikely. If a brand is tied to the comprehension of the show, it will receive higher levels of activation. A brand will receive a very high level of activation if it is a central focus within a scene. In *E.T.*, Reese's Pieces was the central focus of the scene in which the young Elliott placed the candy on the ground to draw *E. T.* from his hiding place to the house. A brand will also receive higher levels of activation by acting as an enabler—when the brand plays a role in allowing some form of action or movement to occur within the story. Coke was an enabler in the movie *Falling Down*. Finally, a brand will be activated if it aids in comprehending the story. When *E. T.* is found in Elliott's house, Reese's Pieces should be reactivated because they aid in understanding how *E. T.* got into the house (by following the trail of candy).

We believe that these examples highlight how the landscape model can explain the extent to which brand placements influence memory for the brand. Although past research has focused on whether the placement was visually prominent or not, we believe that the critical issue is not visual prominence per se but rather the degree to which the placement functions as an aid to comprehending the program. Clearly, the use of any generic candy would have worked to draw *E.T.* into the house. By placing Reese's Pieces in the scene, Hershey took advantage of the candy's role in comprehending a series of scenes in the movie.

A second implication of the mental models framework for understanding brand placement is that mental models provide a mechanism for understanding how the context of a placement will influence the effects of the placement. Although we are not aware of any experimental tests of the role of context on brand placements, intuitively, context should play a role on the impact of the placement. Hypothetically, let us assume that a new form of alcoholic beverage is developed and advertised via a brand placement. We think it is highly unlikely that the company that makes the new beverage would pay for a placement that occurs within a scene where the imbiber of the new alcoholic beverage gets violently ill after a night of heavy drinking. Even if the imbiber of the beverage indicated enjoyment of the beverage, such a placement would probably not result in overly positive attitudes toward the brand among the majority of viewers. The context of the placement has to influence the impact of the placement. The mental models perspective, by focusing on the comprehension process, necessitates consideration of the larger context.

A final implication of our analysis is that brand placement is not likely to influence attitudes toward the brand. The majority of research on brand placement

has not found much of an influence of placements on attitudes or behavior toward the brand. As we argued earlier, to the extent that viewers already have well-developed attitudes toward the product, the placement is not likely to influence their attitudes because viewers rely on their existing attitudes (Roskos-Ewoldsen & Fazio, 1997; Roskos-Ewoldsen, Arpan-Ralstin, & St. Pierre, 2002). We believe that brand placement has significant effects on attitudes or behavior toward the brand only in those situations in which the brand is relatively novel, as was the case with Reese Pieces in the initial showing of *E. T.* If a brand is relatively novel, we believe that the beliefs about the brand that are developed due to the placement influence attitudes toward the brand. Furthermore, as discussed in our example of the new alcoholic beverage, we believe that context and the comprehension process play a significant role in determining what those beliefs about the brand are going to be.

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Embedding Brands Within Media Content: The Impact of Message, Media, and Consumer Characteristics on Placement Efficacy

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The need to rise above the cacophony of marketing messages aimed constantly toward the consuming public has fueled interest in nontraditional ways for companies to get these communications across. The confluence of commercial persuasion and entertainment media, which frequently falls under the category of blurred communications (Solomon & Englis, 1996), is one such solution. Brand sponsors pay for messages that are embedded within featured entertainment, but the sponsors' identity is kept hidden. Tremendous growth in popularity and industry organization over the past 2 decades makes it critical for marketing researchers to gain deeper insights into the phenomenon of embedded brands. This chapter provides a broad commentary on issues we believe warrant further exploration, given the current state of knowledge in the area. The impact of various message, media, and consumer characteristics on the effectiveness of blurred communications is specifically examined.

The most established form of blurred communications is product-related information that gets placed or embedded within the content of visual media. This communication draws on elements from different types of promotional methods, most notably from advertising (i.e., in which the brand sponsor has control over the message content) and publicity (i.e., in which the disseminating medium is also perceived to be the message source). Whereas most attention has been given to placements that occur in movies and television programs, blurred communication is increasingly spanning into other popular media, such as books, magazines, newspapers, and even video games and music.

Product placements have been of growing interest to researchers as well as to practitioners of marketing in recent years (DeLorme & Reid, 1999; Gupta, Gould, & Lord, 1998; Karrh, 1994; Magiera, 1990). Actual efficacy of the practice, however, has not been well tested empirically. Evidence that is available is ambiguous and tends not to extend much beyond brand memory and evaluation. In field settings, the entwined nature of joint promotional campaigns makes it difficult to tease apart the effects of placements from other forms of marketing efforts. Although quantitative measures, such as box office ticket sales, are sometimes used as proxies for the number of impressions created, such estimates are at best approximations of the true impact of placements. A richer notion of the success of a placement must surely incorporate more than mere exposure to placements, memory for placed brands, and attitudes toward them. Some amount of academic conjecture, unaccompanied by empirical validation for the most part, also surrounds the notion of skepticism and trust in placed claims, mainly in the context of consumer deception and implications for public policy (Rothenberg, 1991). The implications of skepticism and trust in placed claims for brand sponsors and not least for participating media add interesting facets to the construct of placement efficacy and warrant further investigation.

Past research has argued for the superiority of blurred communications over more conventional forms of marketing practices on several grounds. Obvious among these are reasons such as the wide reach and longevity of featured entertainment. Consensus additionally appears to have formed for the idea that the hidden commercial intent of placed messages enhances persuasion outcomes (Balasubramanian, 1994). In other words, people do not know that companies pay to place their brands within popular media. Unless consumers realize that marketers are attempting to persuade them, the likelihood of setting up mental barriers, becoming skeptical, and carefully scrutinizing brand claims is low. As a result, some researchers argue that placements are deceptive and need to be regulated, primarily because they may be mistaken for unbiased endorsements by the media vehicles involved. This begs the question whether audiences are unaware of the commercial motives behind product placements. Ample anecdotal evidence about product placements is catalogued in the trade press, and it is increasingly common to encounter brands insinuated within entertainment content. Given this, marketers who still believe in the complete naiveté of audiences may very well be revealing the same about themselves. If consumers are indeed aware of the commercial nature of placements, then serious implications arise for the level of credence that is put in claims made and, importantly, the degree of trust that is placed in the medium.

Broadening the concept of efficacy to include issues such as trust would help marketers understand conditions under which placements can become more or less successful and those under which they can actually be harmful. Messages generated by credible sources are typically more believable, except when biases, where none are expected, get noticed. A backlash against placements at the grassroots level, especially for well-respected and credible media, is not inconceivable. The criticism

surrounding author Fay Weldon's book *The Bulgari Connection* is illustrative of reactions that can be generated against placements that become too obvious, particularly when they occur in media that are thought to be free of commercial biases. For example, in critiquing the book, Kim (2002) makes the following assertion: "A 'commissioned book' represents a violation of one area of society free from the corporate sector's drive to push its 'swooshes'—or its brands. With the heavy hand of corporate marketing entering the popular literature arena, a new wave of cynicism is sure to wash over us." [on-line]

Ruskin (2001) has this to say about *The Bulgari Connection* in an open online letter to book reviewers: "Is it a novel to be reviewed, or is it an advertisement to be commented upon in the business pages? *The Bulgari Connection* is like a Kodak Moment or a Budweiser Whassup! It is an advertisement; and we should call it that and deal with it accordingly."

Excessively placing the Bulgari jewelry brand generated tremendous amounts of cynicism and ill will toward the book itself and exemplifies potential backlashes that disseminating media need to guard against. Conditions where consumers do not place greater faith in messages contained within credible media need further investigation (e.g., when people are highly involved and motivated to process information for themselves). To summarize, we address conditions that are thought to influence the degree of placement efficacy and set forth propositions with broad implications for various constituencies: (1) for marketing practitioners (implications for companies, e.g., success of placements; and for media used, e.g., generation of potential consumer backlash); (2) for marketing theorists (implications for trust in brand claims and trust in the medium given variations in message, media, and consumer characteristics); and (3) for public policy legislators (implications for regulation of placements given the presence of consumer deception).

The rest of the chapter is organized as follows: The next section examines the significance of persuasive communications for companies. We then formally describe the practice of product placements and advantages attributed to them. This is followed by an examination of placement efficacy in terms of memory and attitudes toward brands and claims made, trust in these claims, and trust in the placing medium. Conditions under which placements are more or less effective are then investigated. The effects of message, media, and consumer characteristics on placement efficacy are examined to this end. Finally, broad conclusions based on relationships proposed throughout the chapter are made.

SIGNIFICANCE OF PERSUASIVE COMMUNICATIONS

With profits and long-term survival at stake, companies strive to make consumers aware of, be interested in, try, and ultimately adopt the products and services they have to offer. Given the frenetic pace of the current competitive environment, companies relentlessly bombard consumers with persuasive messages in attempts

to create, reinforce, or alter attitudes and subsequent purchase behaviors. It is therefore in the interest of companies to thoroughly understand whether persuasive attempts with these objectives in mind are effective or not.

One way to understand attitude change and persuasion is by examining the process by which communications are disseminated (Kotler & Armstrong, 2001). On a simplistic level, the communications process may be decomposed into its constituent elements (i.e., the message source, its content, the media that carry the message, the recipients, and the feedback generated thereafter). Characteristics of all elements must be examined to determine the influence each has on overall effectiveness.

Companies can choose any one or more of several media options available to them (e.g., television, radio, magazines, newspapers) for disseminating messages. All media possess unique characteristics. For example, certain associations may be made with print media that cannot be made with visual media. Some readers may choose to believe that newspapers by and large have unbiased content, whereas most movie viewers believe movies are purveyors of entertainment. Or unique characteristics may be associated with specific vehicles within a particular medium. Take, for example, a TV soap opera, such as *Melrose Place*, versus a TV news show, such as *20/20*; a tabloid magazine, such as the *National Inquirer*, versus a news magazine like *U. S. News and World Report*; any mainstream movie, such as the James Bond movies versus a nonmainstream film, such as *In the Bedroom*. In each case, contents of the former are more likely to be characterized as fluff and the latter as substance. Suspicions of commercial motives may be weaker for the latter versus the former. For example, articles appearing in *U. S. News and World Report* are more likely to be associated with editorial independence and unbiased reporting than those appearing in the *National Inquirer*. Consumer reactions to brand inclusions within media content may therefore be contingent on the characteristics of the media vehicle involved.

In decoding embedded messages, recipients make interpretations based on their perceptions about the message source, what the message contains, and the medium that transmits it. Where a sponsor is not noticed, as is believed to be the case with placements, the medium delivering a message is also perceived to be the source. Audience reactions to the message should be captured within the feedback loop so that the source can determine the degree to which its communication objectives are achieved. Various characteristics of these communication elements (e.g., source and media credibility, strength of message, fit of message within content, recipient involvement, and persuasion knowledge) play a role in memory, attitude formation, and persuasion and are further elaborated on in this chapter.

WHAT ARE PRODUCT PLACEMENTS?

Whereas blurred communications span all entertainment media, product placement, the most established form of blurred communications, occurs in movies and is not a new phenomenon. Long before an alien was eating Reese's Pieces in the

1980s movie *E. T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* (Winski, 1982), tobacco companies had actors and actresses smoking cigarettes in movies of the 1920s (Schudson, 1984). In this multimillion dollar industry, once informal arrangements between Hollywood executives and brand sponsors are now organized symbiotic relationships. Brands usually insinuate themselves into media content in return for commercial considerations (Gupta & Gould, 1997), allowing producers to generate revenues and corporations to promote their brands at the same time. More formally, blurred or hybrid messages are a category of communications where brand sponsors pay for a message but are not identified (Balasubramanian, 1994; Sandler & Secunda, 1993; Solomon & Englis, 1996). Of these, product placements refer to instances where commercial motives exist for the inclusion of branded products in movies and T.V. programs (Balasubramanian, 1994). Just as several media are available for message dissemination, brand placements can occur in any media. The term *product placements* is used loosely here to refer to branded inclusion in any medium, not just in movies or T.V. programs, to ease understanding. Some advantages of such nontraditional methods of communication proposed in past literature are briefly touched on later in this chapter. Please refer to McCarty (this volume) for more detailed assessments of the practice.

ADVANTAGES OF PRODUCT PLACEMENTS

Several key advantages of placing products, given positive brand associations and positive positioning, have been proposed in past literature (DeLorme & Reid, 1999; Gould, Gupta, & Grabner-Krauter, 2000). Some advantages deal with cost-effectiveness, width of message reach, longevity of message life, and implied endorsements, and other advantages pit placements against more traditional forms of promotion such as advertising (where there is less integration within naturalistic settings) and publicity (where there is less control over message content). Arguments in favor of product placements are briefly elaborated on here.

First, some have argued that integrating brands within programming provides a potentially cost-effective alternative to advertising (Magiera, 1990). Although difficult to quantify the worth of placements, their cost is a fraction of that for most advertising. Second, entertainment media have wide local, national, and global audiences (Balasubramanian, 1994). Although no standard measurement system has been developed for the industry, Creative Entertainment Services uses ticket sales as a proxy for the number of impressions arising from movie placements. More specifically, box office earnings divided by average ticket price yields a large number of impressions for movie audiences. The number of tickets sold for a moderately successful movie worldwide well exceeds the reach of an average advertisement. Third, these brand impressions continue to accumulate over the extended period of a feature presentation's life. Entertainment vehicles have potentially longer shelf lives (e.g., feature films, television programs, and music have afterlives on home videos, foreign distribution, cable casts, and network broadcasts), and impressions

continue to be formed long after their initial release. Fourth, embedding brands within a context reinforces the impact of the message and creates an appearance of brand endorsement (Balasubramanian, 1994). And, finally, emergence of a payment structure gives sponsor companies greater control over the manner of brand portrayal. Potentially harmful negative brand associations can be avoided in this way.

Balasubramanian (1994) further contends that placements help companies overcome the downsides of both publicity and advertising. Cohen (1988) describes advertisements as messages that are paid for by clearly identified sponsors and publicity as messages that are not paid for and over which the publicized company has no control. On the one hand, sponsors have control over advertised content, and audiences perceive disseminating media as unbiased sources of publicity. On the other hand, advertised messages are biased by nature, and companies have no control over the content of publicity. Placed messages, which are paid for but do not identify the message sponsor, have the potential to overcome consumers' skepticism toward advertisements. In this case, participating media are thought to be the unbiased message sources, and the actual brand sponsors retain control over the message. The effects of product placements have been gauged in various ways in past literature. We elaborate on these and other ways of construing placement efficacy, from the point of view of the brand sponsor as well as the media involved.

MEASURES OF PLACEMENT EFFICACY

It is oftentimes hard to gauge the effect of placements on marketing outcomes, especially given the integrated nature of the promotional mix employed by most firms. Despite gains in popularity, it is unusual for promotional campaigns to consist solely of placements. The integrated marketing plan for the launch of BMW's Z3 roadster (Fournier & Wojnicki, 1999) is a good case study in joint promotions. The portfolio of promotional methods used included a 90-s placement within the James Bond movie *GoldenEye*, television and print advertisements that cross-promoted the car with the movie, public appearances by the actors, plugs on television talk shows, and features within the Neiman Marcus Christmas catalogue. The sensitivity of U.S. auto sales (frequently used as an indicator of public confidence) to the state of the economy further confounds results in this particular product category. The impact of the external environment, along with difficulties in isolating consumer responsiveness to different components of joint promotional campaigns, makes it hard to assess the pure effect of placements in field settings. With rigorous empirical testing arguably in the nascent stage, simulations in laboratory settings (with some consequent control over external influencers) have vast potential for adding to knowledge in the area.

Numerous studies have attempted to examine the effectiveness of placements. Most of these have looked at effects on brand recall, recognition, and attitudes.

Additional investigations must depend on how we understand the efficacy construct and its myriad interpretations. Expanding placement effectiveness to mean more than just good attentional and memory outcomes is key for gaining deeper insights into the manner by which consumers process placed communications. Other candidate indicators can include implications for placed brands (e.g., Do hidden commercial motives allow consumers to have greater faith in placed information?) as well as for media that carry placements (e.g., Do consumers feel betrayed by the medium if the hidden commercial motives are discovered?). These and other measures of placement efficacy are elaborated on in the following sections.

Memory for Placed Information

Most prior empirical studies have looked at brand recognition, recall, and attitudes as measures of placement efficacy. Some researchers find that placements do not lead to significantly altered brand evaluations (Karrh, 1994). Support has, however, been building for the positive impact of placements on aided and unaided brand recall (Babin & Carder, 1996; Baker & Crawford, 1996; Gupta et al., 1998; Ong & Meri, 1994; Steortz, 1987; Vollmers & Mizerski, 1994; Zimmer & DeLorme, 1997). Interpreting these results in the context of psychological theories sheds some light on why memory for placed information may be strong.

Memory research suggests that novel or unexpected information stands out more than information that is expected (Von Restorff, 1933). Consumers expect brand information to be contained within advertisements and other conventional tools of marketing. If an element of surprise or novelty, on the other hand, is associated with encountering product placements, we might expect consumers to remember information that is placed better than information that is advertised.

Indeed, results of multiple studies carried out by the authors (Bhatnagar, Aksoy, & Malkoc, 2002) indicate that people have stronger memories for brands and claims that are placed versus those that are advertised. Of the people who remembered the brands and brand claim, more had difficulties in remembering where exactly placed messages were encountered. This raises the intriguing possibility that the effects of placed messages are more powerful, yet the internalization process is subtler when compared with the effects of advertised messages.

Attitudes Toward Placed Brands

Companies expect consumers to form attitudes toward brands based on the contexts in which they are presented. The seamless manner of brand inclusion within media content makes it easier for people to make paired associations between the context and the placed brand, thereby exploiting tenets of the theory of classical conditioning (Gorn, 1982). Sponsors have some degree of control over the manner in which their brands get portrayed, and it is probably safe to assume that products generally get placed within positive contexts. Sponsors hope these positive feelings engendered via storylines translate into the formation of positive attitudes

toward placed brands. The paid-for nature of placements thus gives companies a modicum of leverage in avoiding adverse brand associations and the subsequent formation of negative brand attitudes (Balasubramanian, 1994).

The extensively researched phenomenon of learning has additional implications for purchase intent toward placed brands. More specifically, within the modeling paradigm, people are thought to learn through formed associations. Bandura (1977) suggests that product demonstrations help people to learn how to use products more quickly. Product placements are similar to actual demonstrations in that they enable consumers to see how and when to use—and who uses—a particular product. Modeling behaviors according to what gets demonstrated can therefore facilitate learning for consumers and increase the adoption likelihood for placed products and services.

Trust in Brand Claims and Trust in Media

The degree of trust consumers are willing to put in brand claims and the trust exhibited toward disseminating media are both excellent indicators of the effects of placements. We focus on the influence of consumers' trust toward brand claims in this section and later further elaborate on the impact of consumers' trust placed in the medium (i.e., media credibility).

A proposed advantage of product placements over other forms of persuasion (e.g., advertisements) is the natural and covert method of message delivery. Placed information is usually embedded within a social context and can be assimilated into the storyline. Key arguments for the effectiveness of these embedded messages center on the hidden commercial intent of placements. Past research (Boush, Friestad, & Rose, 1994; Calfee & Ringold, 1988; Friestad & Wright, 1994) suggests that consumers react with skepticism to cope with noticeable persuasion attempts (e.g., through advertisements and salespeople clearly sponsored by companies). Skepticism toward claims induces closer scrutiny of them and limits consumer deception (Aksoy & Bloom, 1999).

Proponents of the view that placements overcome skepticism and closer examination of product-related claims (Balasubramanian, 1994) base their arguments on the assumption that media productions successfully hide the commercial nature of placements by incorporating brands into the storyline in a natural way. Advertisements are clearly sponsored and delineated from editorial content. It is hard, however, for consumers to determine whether product-related content in movies, T.V. programs, books, newspapers, magazines, and the like is commercially sponsored or not. If the paid nature of product inclusions is not apparent, then unbiased endorsements by the media may be inferred where none exist. Past literature uses these arguments to suggest that consumers' trust in placed claims is higher than their trust in advertised claims. All of this would be true if we were to accept that no conditions exist under which consumers get suspicious of brand placements as marketing attempts and not entertainment.

If the persuasive intent underlying placements becomes apparent, consumers should be just as, if not more, skeptical of placed claims as they are of advertised claims. Consumers who notice paid placements where they are not expected, and feel betrayed, might actually react more negatively than when they notice advertisements (in which the persuasive intent is overt). Conditions that potentially increase or decrease the effectiveness of product placements, for brand sponsors and for media, are discussed at greater length later in this chapter.

CONDITIONS INFLUENCING PLACEMENT EFFICACY

Characteristics of constituent elements of the communication process are expected to impact effectiveness of the process as a whole. In general, media that successfully hide the identity of brand sponsors are perceived as the source of branded messages. Given this, we examine message characteristics (i.e., fit of the placed message with the context, strength of the placement), media or perceived source characteristics (i.e., media credibility), and recipient characteristics (i.e., involvement with placed claims, awareness of persuasive intent), and propose various relationships they have with placement efficacy.

Influence of Message Characteristics on Placement Efficacy

Fit of the Placement With the Context. The degree of fit or congruence between placed brands and the contexts in which they appear is expected to determine the extent to which attitudes toward contexts transfer onto placed brands. This idea is borrowed from branding literature that claims attitudes are found to successfully transfer between parent brands and brand extensions when perceived fit between the two is high (Aaker & Keller, 1990).

Extending this idea to product placements, good fit of the actors or the context with placed products should engender a transfer of positive attitudes from the former to the latter. Greater fit is also expected to enhance attention to, memory for, and believability of brand portrayals and claims made because the relevance of the message within a given context is high. A good example is the case of the BMW Z3 roadster that was placed within the 17th James Bond movie *GoldenEye*. Both the car and the character can be described as sophisticated and sexy. The roadster, with superior technological features, is the vehicle of choice for the British spy, who is portrayed as technologically savvy. In line with the concept of good fit, attitudes toward one component in our example (the actor) are expected to transfer to the other (the car), given the high level of complementarities between the two on relevant attributes. Placed brands, on the other hand, that do not quite fit into storylines are likely to both be noticed as well as raise suspicions of superfluity and of media motives other than artistic expression. In other words, placements that are out of context are expected to be scrutinized negatively and result in lower

levels of trust in brand claims and in the medium. To reiterate, we propose that placement efficacy (e.g., attitudes toward placed brands, trust in placed claims, trust in the medium) increases with the degree of perceived fit between storylines and placed brands. If this holds true, then marketing practitioners need to identify common and meaningful dimensions of contexts and products along which to fashion successful placements.

Strength of the Placement. An additional message characteristic that we believe has the potential to influence placement efficacy is the strength or the intensity of the placement. This construct is somewhat confounded with the previous notion of fit between contexts and placements in that the greater the fit, the stronger the placement is expected to be. Product placement consultants also negotiate the strength of placements with producers on the basis of several other criteria. The number of brand mentions; visual or verbal inclusion, or both; appearances in the foreground or background; actual usage; and integration with the context are all examples of how placement strength can be manipulated. Stronger placements are typically accompanied by higher price tags. Payment structures are usually contingent on a product's intended use and the anticipated degree of exposure (Magiera, 1990). Costs reportedly ranged from \$20,000 for only visual product displays to \$40,000 for brand name mentions to \$60,000 for depicting actual usage in Walt Disney's movie *Mr. Destiny*. With such costs involved, marketing managers who demand maximum returns on their investments must better understand the relationship between placement strength and persuasive outcomes.

Given the menu of possible placement options, it is important to examine whether the levels of attention and persuasion vary with differing strengths of placements. A nonlinear relationship between placement strength and efficacy is anticipated. More specifically, an inverted, U-shaped relationship between the two is proposed (see Fig. 6.1). Say, for instance, we operationalize placement strength as an increasing function of the number of times the brand name is mentioned.

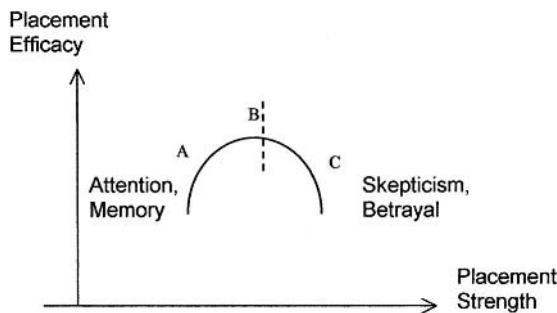


FIG. 6.1 Effect of the strength of product placements on placement efficacy.

The rationale behind the proposed relationship would then be as follows: Initially, measures of placement efficacy, such as brand recall and recognition, are expected to rise with the number of brand mentions (i.e., placement strength) as people are exposed to the brand more extensively. Eventually, however, the incremental gain in efficacy from each additional brand mention is expected to decline (region A). Increasing the number of mentions beyond a certain point (B) might actually make audiences skeptical, and perhaps feel betrayed, leading to a decline in absolute levels of placement efficacy (region C).

Successful product placements are supposed to be subtle and should blend in with the context. When placements become too obvious, consumers are likely to infer manipulative intent and become less susceptible to persuasion attempts. Placements that make consumers think, “I wonder how much this cost (the brand sponsor)?” is no more effective than advertising the brand, and, as argued previously, may even be worse. The controversy surrounding *The Bulgari Connection*, as discussed earlier, is illustrative of consumer reactions against excessive brand placements, especially in types of media that are expected to be sacrosanct and free of marketing motives. The relationship between media characteristics (i.e., media credibility) and consumer characteristics (i.e., involvement with the product category, awareness of persuasive intent) with placement efficacy are discussed next.

Influence of Media and Consumer Characteristics on Placement Efficacy

Consumer Awareness of Persuasive Intent. The lack of consumer awareness that placements (i.e., payments in exchange for brand inclusion) occur is considered central to the effectiveness of placements. This has implications for trust in brand claims and trust in the medium.

As discussed previously, the degree of skepticism for consumers who are able to discern commercial motives underlying placements may be similar to or greater than the skepticism toward advertised claims. Kelley’s (1972) work on attributions has implications for the influence of consumer awareness of persuasive intent on trust in media. It is suggested that message recipients evaluate the motives of message communicators and infer reporting biases (Eagly, Wood, & Chaiken, 1978) in which communicators are seen as insincere in reporting accurate versions of events. Such attributions of communicator insincerity and manipulateness (Mills & Jellison, 1967) result in lower degrees of persuasiveness. In the case of placements, consumers may infer reporting bias on the part of the medium if commercial motivations underlying brand inclusions become known. Results of our own research indicate that perceptions of motive purity for participating media decline when placed messages are noticed (Bhatnagar et al., 2002).

Further, according to the persuasion knowledge model (Friestad & Wright 1994), individuals develop beliefs about how, why, and when marketers attempt to influence them. Individuals therefore develop persuasion knowledge and devise strategies to cope with this knowledge. Viewers who become skeptical closely

scrutinize messages whenever persuasive attempts are inferred, thereby lowering message effectiveness and persuasion.

Increased exposure to and familiarity with placements also has the potential to influence placement efficacy. Increased familiarity will likely influence the individuals' ability to recognize a placement and manage the persuasion attempt. Friestad and Wright (1994), for example, suggest that persuasion knowledge of marketers' tactics is not static. It changes over time and increases with the number of persuasion attempts. This is the same as saying that consumers become more aware of the persuasive intent underlying placements as the placements become increasingly common. Academic research as well as anecdotal evidence suggests that, at least within the United States, consumers' awareness of commercial content in entertainment media is on the upswing. For example, DeLorme and Reid (1999) found that consumers' immunity to specific types of persuasion attempts rises as the degree of exposure increases. Repeated exposures enable consumers to realize the underlying marketing motive. After 30 in-depth interviews, DeLorme and Reid also concluded that most moviegoers were aware of product placements, and their attitudes and interpretations of brands inclusions varied according to the age group they represented. Some evidence also exists for greater consumer acceptance of product placements as legitimate forms of marketing practice (Nebenzahl & Secunda, 1993). This contention, however, is not always supported, especially in the case of highly credible media, where consumer backlash is possible. The following sections elaborate on the impact of media characteristics, (viz., media credibility) and consumer characteristics (viz., involvement) on believability of claims and trust toward the medium.

Credibility of the Medium. Believability and persuasiveness of messages are influenced by the identity of the perceived source (Balasubramanian, 1994). In the case of advertisements, persuasive agendas are overt and the identities of brand sponsors obvious. For placements, however, where persuasive agendas are covert, the medium can be mistaken for the message source. Characteristics of the media used are thus important in determining the extent to which placements persuade consumers.

Message sources (the media in this case) that are characterized as highly credible are more likely to be believed (Choo, 1964). Though perceptions of both expertise as well as trustworthiness underlie the source credibility construct (Dholakia, Sternthal, & Leavitt, 1978), we constrain our arguments to the latter dimension (i.e., perceptions of trustworthiness) for the present. Eagly et al. (1978) suggest that people who believe a source to be biased or untrustworthy in some way are more likely to resist persuasion. In addition to resisting persuasion, we believe consumers may also feel betrayed when perceiving biases that contradict their initial expectations of ethical conduct. A backlash, fueled by consumer resentment, is therefore possible in reaction to placements noticed in media reputed to be credible and free of commercially motivated biases. On the other hand, conditions may exist

under which consumers do not use media credibility as a predictor of claim believability. We therefore examine mitigating circumstances, specifically the level of involvement consumers have within a product category, when credibility enjoyed by the medium no longer influences claim believability next.

Consumer Involvement With Placed Claims. An examination of the persuasive communications process is incomplete without an inspection of message targets. To this end, we examine audience involvement with placed claims and its influence on persuasion. Different people have different levels of personal interest for most product categories and for information about them. Messages that are personally relevant and of interest to some may be passed over without much thought or consideration by others. These variations in involvement result in the activation of different cognitive processes (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979). The elaboration likelihood model (ELM) posits that highly involved individuals use the central route to persuasion: They carefully attend to message content and generate cognitive responses to arguments used (Petty, Cacioppo, & Schumann, 1983). In contrast, less-involved individuals tend to use the peripheral route to persuasion: They are not motivated to attend to message content and look to cues for discerning message suitability. Examples of cues used within the present context can include attitudes toward and perceived credibility of specific media vehicles (such as specific movies), perceived endorsers (such as actors who use products within the movie), and perceived message sources (also the specific media vehicles here).

Marketers need to take such cues into consideration, especially in communicating with target audiences consisting of individuals having little or no personal stake in a marketing message, taking the specific instance of audiences using source credibility as a cue for determining whether to trust the message content and its source. According to tenets of the ELM, we would expect trust in messages and consequent persuasion for less-involved consumers to be greater when credible media are used. For target audiences consisting mostly of very involved consumers, however, a focus on attributes related to the accuracy and relevance of claims is likely more persuasive.

Marketers again need to consider the potential danger of a backlash from consumers, especially where highly involved individuals are faced with placements in highly credible media. Because highly involved individuals are more likely to pay attention to a placement in that product category and scrutinize claims closely, they are also more likely to notice the persuasive intent of brand inclusions. This underlying manipulative intent, when detected, has the potential to generate feelings of betrayal and possibly a backlash, particularly for media that are expected to be highly credible. This has important implications not only for marketing managers that need to make decisions about placing products but also for media that consider entering into such agreements with companies. Characteristics of target audiences thus warrant judicious investigation prior to the design and implementation phase of placements.

CONCLUSION

Message sponsors typically pay for blurred messages while keeping their identities hidden. The most common form of blurred messages is product placements, a creative yet covert method of brand insinuation into popular culture. It can be hard to discern where editorial comment ends and commercial persuasion begins within the entertainment-information mix inhabited by placed messages. Measures of placement efficacy and conditions under which this efficacy can be enhanced or mitigated are discussed in the following sections.

Placement Efficacy and Its Measures

We address the question of how placement efficacy is best measured. Companies' motives for using product placements can range from improving brand and claim memory to instilling trust in claims to fostering positive brand attitudes, with a view to enhancing persuasive outcomes. It is therefore critical for practitioners and researchers in the field of marketing to think of placement efficacy in terms of more than just the memory and attitudinal variables that have been explored in past literature. Placement efficacy has traditionally been examined from the perspective of companies desiring to use placements within their promotion mix. The effects (especially adverse consumer reactions) of placements with respect to media perceptions are, however, academically underresearched. A more comprehensive measure of placement effectiveness must also incorporate measures such as trust in brand claims and effect on trust in the medium. Because placements affect perceptions of brands as well the media involved, media managers must ensure that placements—though they are lucrative revenue sources—do not adversely influence trust placed in a medium. In this way, we suggest additional variables for gauging placement success and attempt to broaden the manner in which placement efficacy is construed.

Proposed relationships of various message (fit with context, strength of placement), media (media credibility), and consumer (involvement with placed claims, awareness of persuasive intent) characteristics with placement efficacy that were touched on previously are briefly summarized in the following sections.

Influence of Message Fit and Strength on Placement Efficacy. Message characteristics such as fit with the context are important. People pay more attention to and internalize claims that have a good fit with the context they are placed in. A nonlinear relationship between placement strength and efficacy is further proposed. Efficacy is expected to be low when placements are extremely weak or extremely strong. When placements are too weak, it is hard for audiences to notice them, and when they are extremely strong, consumers become suspicious that a marketing effort is in progress and become skeptical of the claims. At optimum efficacy level,

a placement should be strong enough to get noticed and internalized but not so strong that it generates negative scrutiny.

Influence of Media Credibility on Placement Efficacy. Media credibility is expected to impact placement efficacy in two ways: Placed messages in highly credible media are more likely to be believed, and consumers may generate a backlash against credible media if commercially motivated messages get noticed. Credible media are considered honest in their reporting, and consumers could feel betrayed if underlying commercial motives become apparent.

Influence of Consumer Involvement on Placement Efficacy. Finally, the impact of consumer characteristics (such as the level of involvement) was examined. When a message is personally relevant or important to consumers, the likelihood of scrutiny is higher. At high levels of involvement, consumers are more likely to ignore media characteristics (like credibility) as cues and scrutinize claims closely.

Two additional issues regarding placements warrant further investigation: implications of placements for consumer deception (and hence public policy legislation) and the examination of placements in media beyond movies and television programs.

Government Regulation of Placement Practices

The virtues of product placements have frequently been extolled by past researchers. Chief among these are hidden commercial sponsorship and seamless integration within media content. It is assumed here that audiences are largely unaware of the commercial intent behind brand placements. Consumers who are unaware that they are targets for persuasive messages are less likely to become skeptical and scrutinize claims. Arguments for the advantage of placements over other overt forms of marketing are to a large part based on this assumption. If this holds true, there is an implicit conflict between the need to make a placement effective and the need to protect consumers from being misled. This raises questions about the ethicality of such practices and the government regulation of industry practices. We can turn the argument around and contend that audiences are sophisticated, and conditions do exist where consumers realize that brands are commercially placed within media content. Consumers who are aware and accepting of placements as legitimate forms of marketing efforts engage in critical thinking, thereby obviating the need for government legislation.

Placements in Varied Media

Most previous research has looked at the effects of placements in visual entertainment media like movies and television programs. Different media, however, are associated with different characteristics, and other forms of media are extensively

used in conveying embedded messages as well (e.g., print media). Generalizing wisdom garnered from research in visual media to understand placements in another medium might not be optimal, not least due to potential differences on relevant media characteristics. The additional examination of placements in media like books and magazines have worth, given that companies are increasingly looking to creatively cut through the clutter of traditional communication methods.

In summary, therefore, placing products within entertainment content has varied implications for marketing practitioners (What are the best practices for designing effective placements? What types of media are most desirable?), marketing theory (What are the implications of media credibility, audience involvement, and awareness for trust in claims and trust in the medium?), and for public policymakers (Do placements deceive consumers, thereby warranting regulation?). In closing, we reiterate that much needs to be done within the area of blurred communications and particularly product placements. Fresh insights into best practices for the industry need to emerge as an outcome of further investigations.

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The “Delicious Paradox”: Preconscious Processing of Product Placements by Children

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*Here is what is offensive. . . . Movies that strew product placement through scenes (not just S***bucks but P*zza H*t and S*ven-El*ven) hoping we will notice only subliminally.*

(from a review by Andrews in the *Financial Times* of *I Am Sam*, May 9, 2002, p. 16)

In the relatively short space of 50 years, children’s lives have been transformed by the easily accessible moving images of television and video, which have blurred the lines between reality and fantasy, between fact and fiction, and between entertainment and commercial communication. Quite a lot of research has been done on the social effects of these media on children (for a review see John, 1999, and for longitudinal evidence about children’s behavior after the introduction of TV in St. Helena, see Charlton, Davie, Panting, Abrahams, & Yon, 2001). Yet the research literature presents contradictory evidence about whether these media exert a negative or positive effect on children’s understanding of the world (Sheppard, 1994). In turn, apart from studies of smoking initiation, almost no research has been done on how TV- and film-mediated understanding affects children’s choice of the branded goods commonly displayed within programming. Product placement, or the appearance of branded goods within entertainment, is not strictly subliminal communication, as suggested in the film review cited at the beginning of this chapter, because products usually have exposure times measured in seconds rather than

milliseconds, often with some verbal labeling. However, as Erdelyi and Zizak (this volume) point out, subliminality was initially understood to be an inaccessibility to consciousness, in which case product placement may be considered to be subliminal. Its effects are taken to be tacit or implicit because recollection of the brands may be unreliable or unavailable. If the effect is subliminal—unconscious influence on choice—then there is a need to understand how it works on children, whose cognitive defenses against the possibility of such influence have not been developed.

Studies of adolescent smoking behavior indicate that when an actor is shown smoking in a film, viewers may associate a type of person with the brand that is shown. Adolescents absorb the images of the actors and use them in developing their own attitudes toward smoking and also their own identity as a smoker (Sargent et al., 2001). Product placement, however, extends into a wide range of products aimed at a wide range of ages, including very young children. Indeed, the most often quoted example of successful placement is Reese's Pieces in the film *E. T.* A consideration of how product placement works from a psychological point of view, especially in the developing child, is overdue.

AN EXPERIMENT WITH CHILDREN

In an attempt to see if product placement has any effect on children's behavior, we recently conducted an experiment to see if children notice product placement in movies, and, if they do, if it has any concomitant effect on their choice within the product category (Auty & Lewis, 2002). We showed 105 children (i.e., four classes), 6–7 years old and 11–12 years old, a brief clip from the movie *Home Alone*. Half were shown a scene in which Pepsi Cola is mentioned and spilled on the table; the other half were shown a similar scene with food and milk but no branded products. Having obtained parental permission to offer them a soft drink, we invited the children individually to help themselves to a drink from a choice of Coke or Pepsi before asking them to describe what they saw in the clip. Every participant was interviewed separately in a fixed-format interview with successive prompts to see if those in the treatment group would more easily recall the brand Pepsi by name. Those who were exposed to the branded clip were significantly more likely to choose Pepsi than Coke. This effect on choice was more pronounced for those who had seen the film before, even if they were not, after prompting, able to recall seeing Pepsi. Notably, the 6–7 year olds in the branded group were less able to recall the brand than the older children were but were just as likely to choose Pepsi to drink.

This result raises many psychological and ethical questions about the practice of product placement. Some of the psychological questions follow:

- Why should product placement have this effect?
- Why should conscious memory of the product not be necessary to produce the effect?

- Why does prior exposure appear to strengthen this effect?
- How long does the effect last on each reminder occasion?
- What implications does this effect have for children's exposure to entertainment that includes product placement?

The main ethical issue that stems from these implications is if product placement is found in further studies to have a discernible effect on product choice, are there grounds for banning the practice in films and other forms of entertainment (e.g., cartoons promoting toys) targeted at children?

In this chapter, we suggest preliminary answers to some of these questions based on related literature on the psychology of advertising, development, and information processing. We examine the issues that might warrant greater regulation of product placement in the entertainment industry and pose some research questions designed to examine the effect of product placement on children in detail. An initial model of how product placements may be processed is put forward for further comment and refinement.

PROCESSING PRODUCT PLACEMENT INFORMATION

In the study just described, the surprising dissociation between the children's ability to recall having seen Pepsi and their choice of this brand over its more successful competitor in the market is, of course, the very effect—increased interest, sales—that advertisers strive for. Yet until relatively recently psychological models of memory have been hard-pressed to account for them. However, research within psychology in the past 15 years has suggested a need to separate out consciously controlled processes that involve well-known techniques of recognition and recall (explicit memory) from nonconscious types of memory in which exposure to an item influences later processing of the item or attitudes toward it without the person necessarily being aware of such an influence.

Perhaps the best demonstration of such effects is the research on adults' recall of advertisements in popular magazines, which was conducted by Tim Perfect and his colleagues (e.g., Perfect & Askew, 1994), similar to earlier work by Janiszewski (1988). They divided participants into two groups. One group was told that they were involved in research on ads (deliberate exposure), whereas the second group was asked to look at the articles in a magazine to judge its layout and readability (incidental exposure). Not surprisingly, the deliberate exposure group was able to distinguish between advertisements seen in the magazines from those not previously seen. However, there was a clear effect in both groups on a range of measures of the effectiveness of the ads. Even though they had not recognized whether they had seen an advertisement, the incidental group still rated pictures seen previously as more appealing, distinctive, and eye-catching. Findings reported

more recently by Shapiro, MacInnis, and Heckler (1997) have again confirmed this affective influence of incidental exposure.

These results tie in with a series of experiments on memory for more abstract stimuli. Not only does the exposure to a picture make adults and children more able to recognize decomposed pictures that present only a small amount of information (Parkin & Streete, 1988), but also subliminally presented abstract geometric shapes (e.g., polygons) are not recognized as having been seen before, although they tend to be identified as preferable to new stimuli on affective rating scales (Kunst-Wilson & Zajonc, 1980). So both laboratory data and experiments with advertisements appear to show that mere exposure to stimuli influences our reactions to them without our being aware of these effects. Mere exposure has frequently been used to explain the effect of advertising, particularly of products that arouse little involvement on the part of the consumer. Perfect and Askew (1994) refer to this dissociation between awareness and response as a delicious paradox. Before we attempt to explore the effect of product exposure in children we must consider what this paradox implies for our understanding of memory and the place of implicit processes within it.

EXPLICIT AND IMPLICIT MEMORY

The dissociation of implicit and explicit memory is widely accepted within models of memory, although there are still divisions about whether it represents two memory systems or different thresholds of activation (Whittlesea & Price, 2001). To understand the mere-exposure effect that we found, a dual system is a useful starting point because it separates the effects of exposure and active recall. A typical dual system model is Parkin's (1997) distinction between the explicit (declarative) systems of semantic and episodic memory, which are by definition accessible to recollection, and a group of lower level (procedural) functions that form implicit memory, which do not require recollection but do not necessarily preclude it. In this scheme processes such as everyday motor or learned responses do not demand consciously recalled events. Parkin's differentiation suggests that implicit memory is not a single process so much as a range of related skills that share the delicious paradox of being dissociable from conscious reflection. We feel that such a distinction can be used to understand the conscious/nonconscious differences reported above.

Kihlstrom (1987) in his review of the cognitive unconscious notes that "a great deal of information processing takes place outside of working memory" (p. 1448). An argument that supports the effectiveness of subliminal advertising and "other forms of surreptitious social influence" (among which we might include product placement) concerns the role of a priming stimulus that "can activate procedural knowledge, and thus affect the way that consumers think about products, or perhaps even their actual buying behavior" (p. 1448). Unconscious procedural knowledge

is described both as innate and automatic; it may work in a social domain as well as for more overtly cognitive operations, such as tying a knot:

Speakers may like one face more than another, while being unable to say exactly why they have that preference. A large number of social judgments and inferences, especially those guiding first impressions, appear to be mediated by such unconscious processes. . . . Thus, people may reach conclusions about events—for example, their emotional valence—and act on these judgments without being able to articulate the reasoning by which they were reached. (p. 1447)

Fluency

If implicit memory is dissociable from other types of recall, how does implicit memory work? This is no easy problem to tackle, particularly because to date there are no brain imaging data to suggest different pathways for explicit and procedural functions. Psychologists since William James (1892) have pointed out that remembering does not simply involve recalling an event. Jacoby (e.g., Jacoby, Kelley, & Dywan, 1989) has long argued that the very reconstructive nature of memory is the key to our understanding of implicit processes: “Subjective experience involves an attribution or unconscious attribution that is as much a function of the present as it is of the past” (p. 392). However, “the tie between representation and subjective experience is actually a loose one” (p. 393). He devised the concept of fluency to explain the workings of implicit memory.

This concept involves attributional processes in which we identify familiarity or pastness in a relatively automatic way—akin to labeling emotions as a consequence of one’s physiological arousal. Sanyal (1992) suggested that some consumer choices might be influenced by perceptual fluency, but little research has been carried out that might confirm or refute his theory. Chung and Szymanski (1997) found in their experiments with low-involvement goods that consumers seem to rely on visual perceptions and then make choices because the item seen previously pops out at them as being somehow familiar. This supports Jacoby’s view that it is cognition about the cause of arousal that determines the feeling that is experienced, and such reactions are based on influences that are both perceptual (e.g., seeing a bottle of Pepsi for the second time in 4 hours) and conceptual (e.g., having familiarity with and views about soda brands). Familiarity, as Yonelinas (2002) points out in his discussion of Jacoby’s model, “is not limited to perceptual fluency, but rather can also reflect conceptual fluency (i.e., enhanced processing of the meaning of the stimuli)” (p. 445).

Divisions and Links in Explicit and Implicit Memory

Much debate surrounds the relationship between declarative (explicit) and procedural (implicit) memory. A brief review of the distinctions made in cognitive psychology should serve to illustrate the complexity of the issues. Theoretical

attempts simply to equate perceptual processing with unconscious memory and conceptual processing with conscious memory were unable to explain experimental findings (see Yonelinas, 2002, for a review of recollection and familiarity). According to Yonelinas, the absence of a neat division between the two may be in part explained by Tulving's (1982) model of declarative memory as comprising both episodic and semantic subsystems, each relying on different areas of the brain. Episodic memory is a record of personal history entailed in recollection, whereas semantic memory is a general knowledge store entailed in the experience of "knowing." Tulving (1982) at first believed that perceptual implicit memory somehow used semantic memory to produce a feeling of familiarity but revised this in later work (Tulving & Schacter, 1990) to distinguish familiarity from perceptual memory. Familiarity was allowed to include the possibility of a link between the episodic and semantic systems. Retrieval in the declarative memory system is still believed to be independent, allowing either episodic or semantic memory to feed in to the sense of familiarity. Perceptual implicit memory, in this view, remains separate, and, as noted previously, Jacoby (Jacoby et al., 1989) argues that familiarity is influenced by conceptual fluency and thus conceptual implicit memory.

Under the familiarity or fluency model, the initial exposure to a stimulus may be such as to elude conscious awareness of the event, but its effect may be evident from a change in task performance that may be attributed only to that event. According to this conception of preconscious perception of product placement, the viewer is exposed to the product and pays attention to it at some sensorimotor level—to use Piaget's term—but below the level of conscious recollection. This perception is sufficient for the item to be more easily processed on a subsequent occasion but without awareness of any prompt. The sense of familiarity aroused by the reminder as a result of the prior exposure (possibly combined with prior knowledge) leads to the ease of processing.

Explaining the Mere-Exposure Effect

Toth (2000) points out that the fluent reprocessing that arises from prior exposure is conceptually similar to the mere-exposure paradigm first put forward by Zajonc (1968). Jacoby's (Jacoby et al., 1989) fluency theory, indeed, seems to us to provide a mechanism for the mere-exposure theory and therefore to provide a coherent explanation for the effect produced by product placement. Preference for such a product becomes "a misinterpretation of the effects of the past as a pleasing quality of the stimulus rather than as a feeling of familiarity" (Jacoby et al., 1989, p. 402). The processing fluency should be even greater if the scene has been seen more than once, as we found in our experiment.

Toth (2000) highlights research concerning the context specificity of unconscious memory that is particularly relevant to product placement (e.g., Hayman & Tulving, 1989). Indeed, Johnstone and Dodd (2000) discovered that when *Spice*

Girls—The Movie was promoted in Pepsi ads, but Pepsi did not appear in the movie, people were unable to make an association between the two in an explicit test of brand salience. This lack of a link may simply be a function of the explicit measures used. However, it fits in with our suggestion that implicit memory—both procedural and conceptual—can be used to explain the effect of product placement where the context remains constant: The reminder of prior exposure leads to familiarity and hence to choice.

HOW PRODUCT PLACEMENT INFLUENCES CHOICE

Our proposed model of how exposure to product placement influences choice (see Fig. 7.1) builds on Parkin’s (1997) model of memory and suggests that incidental exposure will take the implicit route to memory, where classical conditioning, perceptual learning, and verbal priming (especially when the product name is spoken while it is shown on screen) may singly or jointly combine with semantic memory. Semantic memory is our conscious understanding of concepts and their relation to one another; it may be linked to episodic memory, which Parkin (1997) compares to

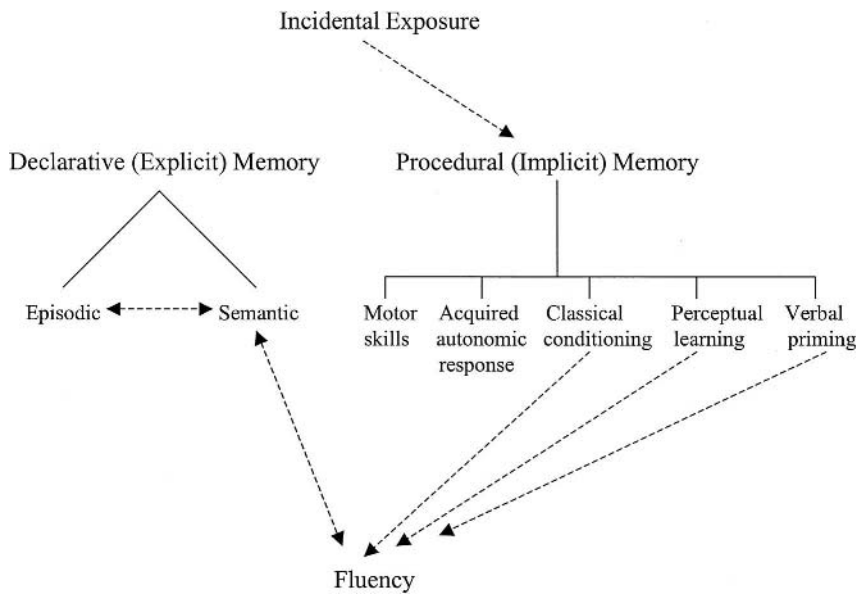


FIG. 7.1 A model based on a dual memory system showing the proposed processing of product placements, where the dotted lines represent responses that may be activated to produce the effect of fluency. Adapted from Figure 5.1 by Parkin, A. (1997). In N. Cowan (Ed.), *Development of Memory in Childhood* (p. 118) © Psychology Press. Reprinted with permission.

a black box flight recorder in that it is the record of events in their specific temporal order. Our double-headed arrows between the two types of declarative memory and between semantic memory and fluency are intended to suggest that earlier memories of pleasurable experience with a product may interact in a nonconscious way with implicit memory in producing the fluency effect, such that when offered a choice from the product category, the person will experience positive affect toward the placed product.

Duration of the Effect

If one accepts that the operation of implicit memory accounts for the observed effect of product placement on choice, the question of most interest then is, how long does this effect last when a reminder stimulus is presented? The literature on the processing of picture identification, which involves participants identifying previously seen pictures from increasingly detailed fragments, suggests that the priming effect of the initial exposure lasts for at least 48 hours and possibly more than a week (Hayes & Hennessy, 1996). Indeed, the length of time that priming effects last is still a matter of debate. Earlier research by Sloman, Hayman, Ohta, Law, and Tulving (1988) found effects lasting months and even up to a year using implicit memory tests.

In light of the findings on context specificity, it is notable, too, that priming effects were found by Hayes and Hennessy (1996) to transfer to new pictures that closely resemble the original items in specific features, as in two different views of a horse. The latter finding suggests that the prime is not being exclusively encoded photographically but also conceptually: "Every time an object is perceived, a single representation which incorporates both perceptual and conceptual features is constructed and it is this representation that mediates priming" (Hayes & Hennessy, 1996, p. 37). Such a theory helps to explain why even the 6–7 year olds seemed to be able to transfer the old image of Pepsi from the movie to the new bottle in making their choice of a drink, although it may have affected their ability to recall the brand. Other studies (e.g., Cermak, Talbot, Chandler, & Wolbarst, 1985) have found that priming effects are greater for words than for nonwords. These findings support the link between semantic memory and implicit memory, as suggested by our proposed model.

IMPLICIT MEMORY IN CHILDREN

The distinction between implicit and explicit memory is especially important for the understanding of children's perceptions of promotional material because implicit memory does not appear to be affected by increasing maturity, whereas explicit measures may fail with children, simply because children are not capable of the retrieval required by the task. Many researchers have found that performance

on a wide range of explicit memory tests improves substantially from early childhood to adolescence (for a review, see Kail, 1990).

How can we be confident that implicit memory is relatively well attuned in children? The research suggests that even infants show the same fluency effects as adults. For example, Rovee-Collier (1989) conditioned 6-month-old infants to kick in the presence of a hanging mobile toy suspended over their crib. Two weeks later, she found that they kicked when the mobile was presented but not when a slightly modified one was placed on the crib. This and her subsequent work (e.g., Gerhardstein, Adler, & Rovee-Collier, 2000) suggest that implicit skills are present at an early age and continue to be differentiated from slowly developing explicit skills. Such effects are demonstrable in laboratory and applied research with children. Parkin and Streete (1988) found evidence of implicit memory using fragmented picture recognition in children age 3 years, despite their having deficits in explicit memory compared with older children (ages 5 and 7 years). Drummey and Newcombe (1995), moreover, show that perceptual priming occurs in 3-year-old children, even when recognition memory is no more than at chance level. Parkin (1993) suggests that the newborn child may “possess a range of implicit learning abilities that enable the development of crude classifications such as familiar-unfamiliar” (p. 204).

Implicit Learning and Behavior

The experimental data appear to carry over to real-world research. For example, Naito (1990) and Naito and Komatsu (1993) have found implicit learning in young children, leaving open the possibility suggested by Krishnan and Chakravarti (1999) that positive affect toward cigarettes and alcohol may be learned early on from advertising and acted on in later life without conscious links to ad exposure. Of particular interest in the research into implicit memory is again the notion of priming and context specificity. Naito and Komatsu (1993) suggest that reactivation of a primed stimulus is “highly specific to the contextual information of the original training, because the reactivation treatment was made ineffective by a change in the reminder” (p. 237). This leads to the implication that in the case of product placement, the film context is an important part of the reminder, and reactivation would probably not occur if an advertising message were to be substituted for the film clip in an experiment.

Familiarity and processing fluency seem to be the keys to explaining our findings described at the outset of this chapter. Brightly colored packages of branded goods may be perceived implicitly in a manner similar to other familiar stimuli, such as faces, which have been found (when priming occurs) to be recognizable very early in life (Ellis, Ellis, & Hosie, 1993). Given that memory performance is a function in part of one’s knowledge base (Naito & Komatsu, 1993) and that children have fewer knowledge pegs of products on which to hang their memories, one could theorize that more of their product perceptions in films and TV will be at a preconscious

level and lead to implicit rather than explicit memories. In this view, the exposure acts as a priming for later exposures simply because it makes the branded product accessible to more fluent processing and a greater need to attribute meaning to the increased fluency because the fluency is experienced as positive affect.

Given the relatively slow development of mnemonic skills like rehearsal of the grouping or "chunking" of information and also the lack of an understanding of the processes of memory (Kail, 1990), our thesis is that young children use implicit processing skills to construct a "language" based on the peripheral and unanalyzed information acquired from their viewing for use in an implicit script of everyday behavior. They acquire feelings about the way things are done that contribute to their learned behaviors, such as consumer choices.

Product Placement and Children's Behavioral Scripts

Does this language of behavior serve to enhance children's position in the family, allowing them as they develop to interpret and take part in the family's consumer decisions? Peracchio's (1993) research suggests that 5-year-olds are capable of explicitly learning scripts for consumer behavior from repeated viewings of audiovisual narratives about consumer-product exchanges. Do these scripts benefit from the implicit memories of product placement? In this view, accessible and inaccessible perceptions are interconnected and provide information for each other in a way that becomes, with development, increasingly elaborate and systematic. The implication is that images of the products in placements are perceived but not analyzed until the conceptual system "determines what gets perceptually processed" (Mandler, 1988, p. 132). This view is consistent with the developing child making greater use of implicit memories as these become important, perhaps for social reasons. Drummey and Newcombe (1995) seem to concur with this possibility when they suggest that "developmental changes in the understanding and use of the relations between explicit and implicit memory may account in part for age-related growth in explicit memory" (p. 563).

Then the question arises, does the script get put into action invariably once it has been written, or are children subject to competing scripts depending on the reactivation or repetition priming of stimuli? Such a view would suggest the importance of primacy and recency effects, first detected in the learning of nonsense syllables by Ebbinghaus (1885) and found to be particularly relevant for measuring the impact of television advertising (Krugman, 1965). Some form of activation of the priming stimulus, which needs to be context specific, such as another viewing of the film or at least the relevant scene, seems to be required for choice to be affected by implicit memories. Also important to processing fluency might be existing familiarity with the product. Baker (1999) found that prior familiarity appears to inoculate brands against attempts to influence choice through the use of preconscious methods. This finding suggests that getting written into the script at an early stage is an important consideration for brands, perhaps another manifestation of the primacy effect.

Are Children Especially Susceptible to Product Placement?

It is perhaps not surprising that young children are captivated by pictorial images. Much research has been done on the differences between the information processing of children and adults from television versus print or radio (e.g., Walma van der Molen & van der Voort, 2000). Whereas in adults reading or audio messages are more effectively learned than those from television, in children early studies have indicated more complete and accurate recall of stories from television over print. This result occurs regardless of reading proficiency (Walma van der Molen & van der Voort, 2000).

Work with very young children (ages 4–10) by Roberts and Blades (2000) points to another area of potential difference in how children process information from visual images: their ability to distinguish the source of their information. Differing explanations are provided for the greater confusion of sources for 4-year-olds than for 10-year-olds under conditions of direct questioning but not in free recall. The only generalizable finding from this research is that age and time between events are both significant mediators in accurate recall. Clearly, an apparent confusion between fiction and reality has implications for children's ability to construct a realistic view of product usage from their knowledge acquired from entertaining programming.

The influence of prior knowledge is an important consideration in any examination of the processing of product placement messages in children. From studies of advertising's effect on children, we know that full understanding of the commercial intentions of advertising messages is not usually established until about 8 years of age, and many 10-year-olds still do not grasp the persuasive intentions (Macklin 1987; Oates, Blades, & Gunter, 2001). Certainly young children respond to advertising. Among very young children (3- to 6-year-olds), 81% can describe the product after having seen the logo for Coca-Cola (Dammler & Middelman-Motz, 2002). Moore and Lutz (2000) found that 7-year-olds "used commercials as a means of discovering heretofore unrecognized opportunities and desires" (p. 42), such as compiling a birthday list. Moreover, these children demonstrated unprompted knowledge of line extensions and brand differences, and 10-year-olds showed increasing insight into the relationship between advertising and products.

Advertising Literacy in Children

Advertising literacy is generally believed to become sophisticated only from early adolescence because it is closely related to an ability to understand the psychological dimensions of a narrative as well as the figurative meanings of language (see Moore & Lutz, 2000; Ritson & Elliott, 1995). In many ways it appears as if a sophisticated understanding of advertising will actually militate against effective commercial communications because it will stimulate counterargument (d'Astous & Chartier, 2000). In older children and adults, there is always the

possibility that conscious countercontrol may offset the emotional response to product placements (Ye & van Raaij, 1997).

Moreover, if a conscious link is made, it may have a negative effect on any subsequent choice decision. If higher order analysis accompanies the initial exposure, then any positive affect may be offset by the negative attitudes formed, assuming resistance to overt placements by the audience, who may perceive it as manipulation. Adults may be able to guard against preconscious perceptions simply by noting the appearance of a product as a placement with a commercial origin. Brucks, Armstrong, and Goldberg (1988), however, found that children 8–12 years of age need cues to produce counterarguments and suggest that cues would not be effective for children younger than 8 years. Hence, one could argue that product placement is likely to be most effective in young children, precisely because it is almost always preconscious, allowing affect without (conscious) cognition: a delicious paradox with potentially insidious and powerful effects.

ETHICAL IMPLICATIONS

If children are being exposed to implicitly processed commercial messages almost every time they watch a film or video, and, increasingly, every time they play a video game (Nelson, 2002), there is a need to understand more precisely what kind of influence these messages are having on their choices. That children do not display explicit recall or even any recognition of the placed product does not mean that they are not affected by these messages, especially cumulatively. It may seem fairly benign to have Pepsi Cola mentioned and drunk at a family meal in *Home Alone*, and the alternative of a generic cola without a doubt would detract from the verisimilitude of the scene. Nevertheless, an awareness of the potential power of product placement messages is needed by program makers and regulators if only to protect children from unsuitable messages. For products such as cigarettes and alcohol, the brand of the product is not the important issue—rather it is the invisible scripting that may be going on in children, leaving them with implicit perceptions of smoking and (often excessive) drinking as behavior associated with being grown up. It is notable that smoking initiation among adolescents in the United States resumed its upward trend after a dip from 1980–1984. Over the entire 1980s, expenditure on cigarette advertising decreased, while expenditure on promotion (including promotional allowances, sampling, entertainment and store displays) went up almost threefold in real terms (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1995). Depiction of smoking in films, but not television, followed a similar trend (Pechmann & Shih, 1999). Can it be that the dip in smoking initiation in the early 1980s was associated with Larry Hagman's ban on smoking by characters in the TV series *Dallas*, supported by less-publicized abstentions in other television programs?

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION: A BLUEPRINT FOR RESEARCH ON CHILDREN AND PRODUCT PLACEMENT

There is a need for much more experimental research into the effect of product placement on children. Several questions have arisen in the course of this exploratory chapter:

- How much exposure is needed for an effect to be produced, both in terms of length of time on the screen and number of repetitions?
- How long do the effects last?
- At what age do children start noticing product placement explicitly?

The research addressed in this chapter suggests that exposure and choice are closely related, despite this association not being accessible to conscious awareness. Memory research also seems to show that fluency effects last more than a week, but we need to explore whether product placement might have such lasting effects.

Questions specifically related to how implicit memory may interact with explicit memory also need to be addressed:

- What is the relationship (if any) between explicit and implicit memory? What determines the direction of the influence?
- To what extent is prior familiarity with the stimulus a factor in the effectiveness of product placement? Is the effect more or less pronounced in the case of novel products?
- Are children more susceptible than adults to the influence of implicit memory?

These are crucial questions both in our understanding of human memory and how market researchers can apply theories of memory to real-world issues, such as product placement. We believe that research on such applied effects and complex theories of memory can exert a mutual influence on one another, as some of the research we have discussed in this chapter suggests (e.g., Perfect & Askew, 1994). We also believe that comparisons between children and adults often help in our understanding of the way memory influences our actions.

Assuming that future experiments confirm the influence of product placement on children's choice, ethical issues are also raised:

- What might be the effect of regulating such placements?
- And, hence, what would be the best form of regulation?

The role of implicit memory in children's development is also worthy of more research. As most data on product placement come out of the laboratory, we

need to examine how this form of marketing communication works in the real world—particularly how it filters into other aspects of behavior, for example, the following:

- How does it influence negotiations between parents and children in the choice of products?
- How does it affect children's peer discussions and, indeed, their role in those discussions about products?

Finally, the theory and data reported in this chapter suggest that the practical issue of how advertising research is currently conducted should also be investigated. The findings of recent research into memory need to be diffused throughout the advertising industry. If the delicious paradox of exposures that influence choice without conscious recollection is confirmed, should agencies continue to measure the effectiveness of ads by eliciting day-after recall? When the influence of their messages might be much more subtle than simple awareness, especially in the case of children, does it make sense to test advertising communications—their creative elements and minimum effective frequencies—using measures of explicit memory?

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**II. THE PROGRAMS BETWEEN THE ADS: THE
PERSUASIVE POWER OF ENTERTAINMENT
FICTION AND NARRATIVE**

Pictures, Words, and Media Influence: The Interactive Effects of Verbal and Nonverbal Information on Memory and Judgments

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Rambo had conquered Asia. In China, a million people raced to see First Blood within ten days of its Beijing opening, and black marketers were hawking tickets at seven times the official price . . . In Chengdu I heard John Rambo mumble his First Blood truisms in sullen machine-gun Mandarin and saw the audience break into tut-tuts of head-shaking admiration as our hero kerpowed seven cops in a single scene . . . “I think he’s very beautiful” cooed a twenty-three year old Chinese girl to a foreign reporter. “So vigorous and so graceful. Is he married?”

Pico Iyer (1988, p. 3)

The darkened hall of the movie theatre lulls us into a zone where we can play out our fantasies. We mentally cheer as the good guys win over the evil ones. We watch with bated breath as apocalyptic events threaten our planet. We get teary eyed when a character beats all odds to find happiness. When we finally step out of the movie theatre into the glare of the lobby, our return to reality may not be completely successful.

The images created by the entertainment media, whether encountered in a darkened movie theatre or in sitcoms, soaps, news reports, and advertising, do appear to blur the lines between reality and what we perceive it to be. These images can have a persisting influence on people’s attitudes, beliefs, and behavior in ways that we have only recently begun to uncover. O’Guinn and Shrum (1997) paint a compelling picture of the consequences of excessive television viewing. They

find that heavy viewers of television are more likely than infrequent viewers to overestimate the frequency with which individuals drive luxury cars, have swimming pools in their backyards, or manifest other characteristics of an affluent lifestyle (see Shrum, Burroughs, & Rindfleish, this volume). These effects occur in part because people are typically unmotivated or unable to identify the sources of information they have acquired (Hasher, Goldstein, & Toppin, 1977; Jacoby, Kelley, Brown, & Jasechko, 1989; Johnson, Hashtroudi, & Lindsay, 1993). Thus, they fail to distinguish between their memories for actual events they have read about or personally experienced and their memories of fictional events they have seen on television. Consequently, they often retrieve and use these latter events to estimate the likelihood that the events occur in daily life. In many instances, people are unaware of the biasing influence of the media on their estimates. But even when they are conscious of bias, they do not know how much they should adjust to compensate for it (Petty & Wegener, 1993). Consequently, they can often fail to adjust enough or, at other times, can adjust too much. In the latter case, the biasing factors could have a negative, contrast effect on the judgments they report (for evidence of these overadjustments, see Isbell & Wyer, 1998; Ottati & Isbell, 1996).

However, the impact of the entertainment media on reactions to real-world events may be even more pervasive than Shrum et al.'s (this volume) research suggests. For example, concepts and knowledge that become easily accessible in memory as a result of exposure to movies and television can affect the interpretation of new information and the implications that are drawn from it. To this extent, the concepts can influence the impact of the information on judgments and decisions to which it is relevant.

These effects are discussed in this chapter. We focus in particular on the way in which visual images, stimulated by pictures or video presentations of the sort people encounter in movies or on television, can influence the impact of information that people receive subsequently. We first discuss how concepts activated by visual stimuli can influence reactions to information to which these stimuli are objectively irrelevant. We then consider how people's visual image of a stimulus person can influence the criteria they use to assess the implications of other, verbal information about the person and the effectiveness of applying these criteria. These effects can depend on whether the stimuli that induce these visual images are conveyed at the same time as the written information or are created beforehand. The influences of verbal and visual information on one another are reciprocal, however. In the final section of the chapter, we consider the way in which people's communications about events they have experienced visually (e.g., in a movie) can influence their later memory for these events and, therefore, their beliefs and opinions. The research we discuss, most of which was conducted in our own laboratory, was generally not designed to have a direct bearing on the interface between entertainment and persuasion. However, its implications for this interface should be apparent.

EFFECTS OF MEDIA-CREATED VISUAL IMAGES ON RESPONSES TO ACTUAL PEOPLE AND EVENTS

To reiterate, Shrum et al.'s (this volume) research clearly demonstrates that exposing television viewers to fictional events can influence their perceptions that similar events actually occur in the real world. To this extent, it can influence their beliefs and attitudes about the persons and objects to which the events are relevant. This influence could occur for two reasons.

First, people might come to regard situations that occur frequently on television as normative. This could have both desirable and undesirable consequences. On one hand, exposure to women and African Americans as heads of state, lawyers, or scientists could increase people's perceptions that their occupancy of these roles is commonplace and, therefore, could also increase their acceptance of individuals holding these positions in the real world. On the other hand, individuals might use the situations and events that occur frequently on television as standards of comparison in evaluating their own life circumstances and may be motivated to engage in behavior that attains these standards. Thus, if heavy television viewers overestimate the proportion of people with possessions that exemplify an affluent lifestyle (O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997), they may be more inclined than other individuals to evaluate their own life circumstances unfavorably in relation to this implicit standard of affluence and may try to acquire these possessions or engage in other activities that require them to live beyond their means. These influences of television could underlie the acquisition of materialistic values at a very early age.

Other considerations arise when the situations that occur on television are undesirable. For example, exposure to violence and aggression on television could increase people's perceptions that this behavior is common and, perhaps, inevitable. If this is so, it could decrease their concern about the violence they encounter in the real world. (For a more detailed discussion of the effects of television violence on desensitization to aggression, see Drabman & Thomas, 1975.)

A second possible effect of exposure to violence is quite different. Lerner, Miller, and Holmes (1976; see also Lerner & Simmons, 1966) suggest that people are motivated to believe that the world is just (i.e., that people not only get what they deserve but also deserve what they get). Movies and television shows in which individuals are maimed or killed could activate viewers' concerns about injustice and, therefore, could increase their need to reestablish their belief in a just world when they encounter actual situations. In other words, heavy television users might be more inclined than occasional viewers to believe that perpetrators of violence will be punished. At the same time, they might also be inclined to believe that the victims of violence and aggression are responsible for their victimization and, therefore, that they deserve the fate that has befallen them. (For a summary of evidence that just-world considerations often mediate perceptions of rape, see Wagstaff, 1982). Perhaps ironically, this tendency should be most evident when

the aggression has extremely negative consequences and hence the threat to one's belief in a just world is particularly great.

Media Influences on Reactions to Rape: An Empirical Example

Effects of Exposure to Aggressive Acts and Outcomes

To summarize, exposure to violence in the media could increase tolerance for aggression in the real world for two somewhat opposing reasons. On one hand, it could increase perceptions that aggression is normal and socially sanctioned and that one should not be particularly upset by its occurrence. This is most likely to occur if the aggression is relatively mild. If the aggression is extreme and ostensibly hard to justify, however, it could stimulate the need to believe in a just world, leading individuals to believe that the victims of aggression deserve their fate.

Wyer, Bodenhausen, and Gorman (1985) examined these possible effects in a study of the beliefs that mediate reactions to rape. We were interested in the extent to which activating aggression-related concepts in one context would influence reactions to rape situations that people encounter in an unrelated context. To do so, we asked participants to engage in two apparently different experiments. The first study was ostensibly concerned with the things shown in the media that college students find objectionable. On this pretense, we exposed participants to slides of 12 pictures. Nine of these pictures showed objects and events that participants were unlikely to consider offensive. The other three pictures varied over conditions. In one case, these pictures showed aggressive acts that were relatively common (police subduing a criminal, a boxing match, etc.) and, therefore, were likely to activate concepts that aggression is normal and socially sanctioned. In a second condition, the pictures portrayed severely negative outcomes of aggression that activated the concept that human beings were cruel and inhumane (a lynching episode, a dead soldier with a hole in his head, etc.). (Our assumptions concerning the concepts activated by the pictures were confirmed on the basis of normative data obtained prior to the experiment.) The third, control set portrayed stimuli that might be considered unpleasant but were unrelated to aggression (deformed babies, a smoking advertisement, etc.).

Participants rated each of the 12 pictures in terms of how objectionable it was. Then, they were told that the experiment (which took about 10 min) was over but that, because there was time remaining, we would like them to help another faculty member who was conducting a study in a different room down the hall. When they arrived at this room, however, they found a sign on the door indicating that the experimenter would return shortly and that while they were waiting they should complete a questionnaire that was lying on the table. This questionnaire introduced the "new" study as an investigation of the factors people consider important in judging criminal cases, that different participants were being asked to

consider different types of crimes, and that the one they would personally be asked to consider was rape. (The nature of the crime was handwritten on the instruction page to give the impression that participants were assigned this type of crime by chance.) The questionnaire contained descriptions of four rape cases that varied in terms of whether the alleged rapist was an acquaintance of the victim or a total stranger and whether the victim did or did not try to resist. Participants read each scenario and then reported several reactions. Two questions concerned (1) their belief that the defendant should be convicted and (2) their belief that the defendant actually was convicted. Three others concerned the victim's responsibility for the incident (whether she provoked the rape, whether she could have avoided it, etc.).

We assumed that the pictures to which participants were exposed in the first experiment would activate concepts that they would use to construe the implications of the rape scenarios they encountered in the second experiment. Therefore, if socially sanctioned acts of aggression activate the concept that aggressive behavior is normal, exposure to these acts should decrease beliefs that the defendant should be convicted and, for that matter, that he actually was. This was not the case, however. Participants' beliefs that the defendant was and should be convicted are shown in the first two rows of Table 8.1, averaged over the four scenarios. Exposure to aggressive acts only slightly decreased beliefs that the defendant was convicted relative to control conditions and actually increased beliefs that he should be convicted. Neither of these effects was significant.

Exposure to extremely negative outcomes of aggression also failed to influence beliefs that the defendant should be convicted. However, it increased the belief that the defendant actually *was* convicted. This pattern of results is consistent with the hypothesis that exposure to extremely negative consequences of aggression threatened participants' perception that the world is just. Consequently, it motivated them to reaffirm this perception by believing that the defendant got what he deserved.

If this interpretation is correct, however, it should also be manifested in the participants' belief that the victim deserved what she got, as reflected in judgments

TABLE 8.1
Judgments of the Defendant and Victim As a Function of Concepts Activated
by Priming Stimuli

	<i>Primed Concept</i>		
	<i>Control</i>	<i>Aggression Is Normal and Socially Sanctioned</i>	<i>Humans Are Cruel and Inhumane</i>
Belief that defendant should be convicted	8.97	9.62	8.70
Belief that defendant was convicted	3.95	3.47	5.10
Belief that victim was responsible	2.97	3.07	4.20

Note. Judgments are reported along a scale from 0 (*not at all likely*) to 10 (*very likely*). Based on data from Wyer, Bodenhausen, and Gorman (1985).

that she was partly responsible for her fate. This was also the case, as shown in the third row of Table 8.1. Although exposure to socially acceptable acts of aggression had relatively little influence on participants' perceptions of the victim's responsibility, exposure to severely negative outcomes of aggression substantially increased these perceptions. Moreover, this was true regardless of whether the rapist was a stranger or an acquaintance and regardless of whether or not the victim resisted. Thus, activating concepts that the rapist was cruel and inhumane not only increased the belief that the defendant got what he deserved but also increased the belief that the victim deserved what she got.

The implications of these findings for the impact of the media on perceptions of rape must remain speculative. The effects of situationally primed concepts on judgments are often of short duration. However, the effects of frequent exposure to stimuli on concept accessibility are much more enduring (Higgins, 1996; Higgins, Bargh, & Lombardi, 1985). It therefore seems reasonable to assume that frequent exposure to extreme violence could induce a chronic tendency to maintain a belief in a just world that is manifested in a variety of contexts. To this extent, it could have effects similar to those that Wyer et al. (1985) observed.

Other Determinants of Reactions to Rape

Concepts associated with aggression are not the only mediators of reactions to rape. Zillman and Bryant (1982) found that exposing college students to massive doses of pornography over a period of several weeks increased their tolerance for rape, and this effect was reflected in the attitudes that participants reported several months later. Pornography could activate concepts of women as sex objects who enjoy being dominated and as interested in sexual pleasure alone. These concepts could stimulate empathy with the defendant in a rape case and could also influence judgments of the victim's responsibility for the incident.

Additional data obtained by Wyer et al. (1985) bear on this possibility. In two additional conditions, the priming stimuli portrayed women as sex objects. In one case, the stimuli were sexually arousing, consisting of nude centerfolds, one of which showed a woman masturbating. In a second set, however, the pictures included a cartoon, a picture of a stripper, and a branded woman, none of which elicited sexual arousal.

Pictures had no influence on either the belief that the defendant should have been convicted or the belief that he actually was. However, pictures did have an impact on judgments of the victim's responsibility for the rape, the nature of which depended on participants' sex. Specifically, pictures that depicted women as sex objects increased men's perceptions that the victim was responsible for the incident but decreased women's perceptions of her responsibility. In other words, exposing male participants to the stimulus pictures appeared to activate concepts of women as sex objects, as we expected. However, exposing female participants to these stimuli appear to have activated the concept that *men think of women as*

sex objects, inducing reactance and, therefore, decreasing perceptions of the rape victim's responsibility.

The implications of these findings for the impact of the media, like the effects of activating aggression-related concepts, should be treated with caution. Nevertheless, to the extent that frequent activation of concepts increases their chronic accessibility in memory, these findings suggest that frequent portrayals of women as sex objects in the media is likely to polarize existing differences between males and females in their attitudes toward the victims of rape without necessarily influencing their beliefs that the rapist should be punished.

Effects of Image-Activated Stereotypes on Behavior

As we speculated earlier in this section, frequent portrayals of minority group members in responsible social roles could increase perceptions of their suitability for these positions in the real world. This increase may be accompanied by a decrease in stereotype-based beliefs about the attributes of these individuals. As Devine (1989; see also Lepore & Brown, 1997) points out, however, people may have knowledge of the stereotype even if they do not consider it to be valid. Consequently, exposure to members of the stereotyped group can activate trait and behavioral concepts that are associated with the group, and these concepts, once activated, can be applied in other situations to which the stereotype is objectively irrelevant. Moreover, these effects can occur without awareness.

This possibility was demonstrated by Bargh, Chen, and Burrows (1996) in research on the effects of concept activation on overt behavior. In one study (Bargh et al., 1996, Experiment 3), European Americans were subliminally exposed to either Black or White faces while they performed a boring task. After completing the task, participants were told that, due to a computer malfunction, they would have to perform the task again. Participants' nonverbal reactions to this request were unobtrusively observed. Participants manifested more signs of irritation and antagonism if they had been exposed to Black faces than if they had been exposed to White faces. This suggests that exposure to the faces of African Americans, who are stereotyped as being hostile and aggressive (Devine, 1989), activated concepts associated with this behavior, and this disposed participants to behave similarly. Moreover, these effects occurred without awareness of the stimuli that led to the stereotype's activation.

That activating a stereotype influences the behavior of individuals to whom the stereotype does not apply is intriguing. The processes that underlie this effect, however, are not completely clear. One possible explanation is suggested by Prinz's (1990) speculation that to comprehend another's behavior people spontaneously imagine performing the behavior themselves, thereby establishing an association between a representation of others' behavior and a representation of their own. As a result of this association, factors that activate concepts about another's behavior

can increase the disposition to behave similarly under conditions in which the behavior is applicable.

The activation of a stereotype alone is unlikely to stimulate the behaviors that exemplify it, of course. Participants in Bargh et al.'s (1996) study would undoubtedly not have conveyed hostility spontaneously if the situation had not been one that disposed them to feel irritation for other, stereotype-unrelated reasons (i.e., the request to repeat a boring task). In other situations, the same stereotype could activate quite different behaviors. This was demonstrated in an unpublished study by Colcombe and Wyer (2001). In this study, participants who had been exposed to priming conditions identical to those administered by Bargh et al. were asked to perform a mathematics test. In this study, participants performed less well on the test if they had been subliminally exposed to Black faces than if they had been exposed to White ones. African Americans are stereotyped as unmotivated to try hard in academic achievement situations, so activating the stereotype increased participants' own disposition to behave similarly. These results, in combination with Bargh et al.'s (1996) findings, suggest that the particular behavior that is influenced by activating a stereotype depends on situational factors as well as the stereotype itself.

Moreover, the concepts associated with the stereotype may need to be activated without participants' awareness. In other conditions of Colcombe and Wyer's (2001) study, Black and White faces were primed overtly rather than subliminally. In these conditions, participants performed better when they had been exposed to Black faces. Consciousness of the stereotype of African Americans as doing poorly in achievement situations apparently stimulated participants to try harder, so they could distance themselves from the stereotyped group.

These contingencies become particularly important when evaluating the implications of these findings for the effects of the media on behavior. It obviously would be inappropriate to assume that exposing television viewers to members of a stereotyped group increases their likelihood of manifesting stereotype-related behavior in general. This should only occur if situations arise in which the stereotype-activated behavior is applicable. Moreover, if people are conscious of the stereotype at the time a behavioral decision is made, they may try to compensate for its influence and thus might be less inclined to make a stereotype-related decision than they otherwise would.

On the other hand, people do not need to be unaware of the stereotype itself for it to have an impact. They need only be unaware of the potential relatedness between the situation in which the stereotype is activated and the situation in which the behavior occurs. It is therefore conceivable that frequently exposing people to members of a stereotyped group in the media will increase the likelihood of behaving in stereotype-related ways under conditions in which the behavior is relevant. Moreover, this may occur primarily when individuals are not consciously thinking about the group and the behaviors associated with it. To avoid these effects, it may be necessary to change people's perceptions of the stereotype itself. Media exposure to stereotyped group members who behave in stereotype-inconsistent ways might be one way to accomplish this.

EFFECTS OF VISUAL STIMULI ON INFORMATION PROCESSING

To reiterate, visual portrayals of persons and social events can influence people's attitudes and behaviors to which these portrayals are objectively irrelevant. Visual images are even more likely to influence the processing of information about individuals and events to which they directly pertain. The nature of this influence is less obvious than it might appear, however. For example, pictures might seem intuitively likely to provide information about their referents and, therefore, to have a direct impact on judgments of these referents. In fact, however, research in the consumer domain has provided very mixed evidence that pictures of a product have an impact on product evaluations over and above the effects of verbal product descriptions (Costley & Brucks, 1992; Edell & Staelin, 1983; but see Sengupta & Fitzsimons, 2000, for an alternative view).

An understanding of the combined influence of verbal and visual information is complicated by the fact that the two types of information can elicit different types of cognitive activity. Pictures, for example, are likely to be processed holistically or configurally, creating a general impression that is independent of any particular feature (for a theoretical analysis of this possibility, see Wyer & Radvansky, 1999). Verbal information, however, might be processed either holistically or more analytically, depending on the type of information and the format in which it is conveyed. For example, a person's opinions on a set of social issues might be evaluated in terms of their implications for whether the person is socially liberal or conservative. However, the favorableness of each opinion could also be assessed independently and these individual assessments later combined mechanistically to form an overall evaluation (cf. Anderson, 1971; Fishbein & Hunter, 1964). When verbal information can be easily evaluated using either a piecemeal or a holistic processing strategy, the presence of pictures may create a cognitive set to think holistically, therefore influencing the conclusions drawn from it relative to conditions in which the pictures were not conveyed. Other verbal information, however, might be presented in a way that is much easier to process in one way than the other. In this case, the holistic strategy activated by pictures could facilitate or interfere with this processing, depending on its compatibility with that required.

Two quite different sets of studies bear on these possibilities. Although the studies were conducted in the domain of political judgment, they have more general implications.

The Effects of a Politician's Image on Responses to Issue Stands

The media often show political figures in situations that have little objective relevance to an evaluation of their qualifications for public office. Yet these portrayals create an image of these individuals that influences people's general perceptions of their sincerity, integrity, self-confidence, and general personality. These perceptions can be used as a basis for evaluating the individuals independently of their

stands on specific issues. The role of image has been well known in the political arena since the 1960 Kennedy-Nixon debates, which increased Kennedy's popularity despite the fact that Nixon's positions on the issues were more compelling (Englis, 1994).

However, a politician's image not only can have a direct influence on judgments of the candidate but also can affect responses to other, more substantive information. For example, persons who receive information about a politician's stands on social issues might normally assess each individual issue position and evaluate the candidate on the basis of the number of these positions with which they agree. However, if people have formed a global image of the politician, and if this global criterion for judgment is salient, it could induce a tendency to use general criteria to evaluate the implications of other available information as well. Thus, for example, it might stimulate individuals to assess the implications of the person's issue stands for his or her general political ideology and to base their judgments on this ideology independently of their agreement with specific issues.

A study by Wyer et al. (1991) suggests that this may be the case. Nonacademic employees were recruited for a study of the way people make judgments of political candidates on the basis of the sort of information they might receive during an election campaign. On this pretence, they were given two types of information about a member of the U. S. House of Representatives who had recently run for the Senate in a neighboring state. First, participants were shown a videotaped, nonpolitical speech of the candidate's remarks at a bicentennial celebration at which he was asked to present an award to a local dignitary. The speech, delivered by a graduate student in theatre who was an accomplished character actor, was identical in content in all conditions. However, it was delivered in either a forceful, articulate manner that conveyed a favorable image or in a bumbling manner, with inappropriate pauses, fidgeting, and other mannerisms, that conveyed an unfavorable impression.

The second type of information was ostensibly an audiotaped portion of a radio program that had been sponsored by the League of Women Voters. In this program, commentators reviewed the candidate's votes on several recent bills that had come before the House. His votes on six of the bills (e.g., a proposal to increase military spending by 15%, a proposal to allow prayer in public schools) conveyed either a consistently conservative or consistently liberal ideology. (Votes on four other bills had no ideological significance.)

This information was conveyed in three conditions. In *no-delay* conditions, participants listened to the radio program describing the candidate's issue stands immediately after they watched the videotape of his speech. Then, after doing so, they reported their impression of the candidate along a 100-point "feeling thermometer." The procedure in two other conditions was similar, except that a 24-hour delay was introduced either (a) between seeing the videotaped speech and exposure to the candidate's issue positions (*delayed-information* conditions)

or (b) between exposure to the candidate's issue stands and judgments (delayed-judgment conditions).

In all conditions, participants, after evaluating the candidate, reported their personal positions on each of the issues to which the candidate's votes pertained. Finally, they indicated their own party affiliation and ideological orientation. These latter data, in combination with the candidate's issue stands, were used to define two independent variables. First, participants' reported ideology was coded as either similar or dissimilar to the candidate's, as implied by the liberal or conservative orientation of his issue stands. Second, participants were classified as either generally in agreement or generally in disagreement with the candidate's specific issue positions, based on the proportion of ideologically relevant issue stands with which they agreed. (Each participant agreed with at least one liberal and one conservative issue position, regardless of his or her general ideology. Therefore, indices of ideological similarity and agreement level could be obtained for each participant.)

Evaluations of the candidate are shown in Table 8.2 as a function of each informational variable and delay conditions. These evaluations were obviously affected by the favorableness of the candidate's image as conveyed in the videotape. Moreover, the candidate's image had more effect when it was salient at the time of judgment (i.e., under no-delay conditions) than when it was not. The effects of agreement and ideological similarity are of greater interest, however. When the candidate's image was not salient to participants at the time they received

TABLE 8.2
Candidate Evaluations As a Function of Delay Conditions, Image, Agreement
With the Candidate's Issue Stands, and Ideological Similarity

	<i>No-Delay Conditions</i>	<i>Delayed-Information Conditions</i>	<i>Delayed-Judgment Conditions</i>
Candidate's image			
Favorable	51.0	53.8	47.7
Unfavorable	35.6	44.6	42.9
Difference	15.4	9.2	4.8
Participants' agreement with issue stands			
Agree	42.3	64.5	48.1
Disagree	33.2	30.9	40.1
Difference	9.1	33.6	8.0
Ideological similarity to candidate			
Similar	49.6	48.1	57.3
Dissimilar	26.0	47.3	31.0
Difference	23.6	0.8	26.3

Note. Judgments are reported along a 100-point "feeling thermometer" from 0 (*very unfavorable*) to 100 (*very favorable*). Based on data from Wyer et al. (1991).

information about his issue stands (under delayed-information conditions), they based their evaluations of the candidate on their agreement with his issue positions, and the candidate's similarity to them in general ideology had virtually no effect. However, when participants learned about the candidate's issue stands immediately after they had viewed his image-inducing speech, they based their evaluations on the candidate's general ideology, and their agreement with him on specific issues had little influence. This was true under both no-delay and delayed-judgment conditions. Thus, the indirect effect of the candidate's image on the processing of issue information (unlike its direct effects on judgments) was not a function of its salience at the time judgments were reported. Rather, it depended on the salience of the candidate's image at the time the issue stand information was conveyed.

In summary, the salience of the candidate's image at the time his issue stands were learned altered the way in which the implications of these issue stands were construed. That is, when a global image of the candidate was not salient, participants assessed their agreement with his stands on specific issues and based their judgments on this criterion independently of the ideological implications of the candidate's positions. When the candidate's image was salient at the time his issue positions were learned, however, participants applied a global criterion in assessing the implications of his issue positions as well. Consequently, their agreement with the candidate on specific issues had relatively little effect.¹

It is important to keep in mind that the influence of the candidate's image in this study was only evident when it was particularly salient at the time the issue stand information was presented. As we have noted earlier, however, the accessibility of previously acquired knowledge is likely to be a function of the frequency with which participants have been exposed to it as well as the recency with which they have encountered it, and the effects of frequency are much more enduring (Higgins, 1996; Higgins, Bargh, & Lombardi, 1985). To this extent, Wyer et al.'s (1991) results suggest that the frequent exposure to politicians in the media could produce a general tendency to evaluate them on the basis of their general ideology independently of their specific issue positions. It is interesting to speculate that an incumbent president, who is often shown in newspapers or on television, is more likely to be evaluated on the basis of global ideological criteria, whereas less

¹An alternative interpretation of these results might be that participants experienced overload when the candidate's videotaped speech and his issue stands were conveyed in temporal proximity, and, therefore, they devoted less cognitive effort to an assessment of the candidate's issue positions. If this were the case, however, they would presumably be inclined to use the candidate's image as a heuristic, leading it to have greater effect on judgments than it otherwise would. In fact, the candidate's image had no greater effect under delayed-judgment conditions (when the two types of information were presented together) than under delayed-information conditions. Therefore, this alternative interpretation does not seem viable.

well-known challengers, whose public images are less well established, are more often evaluated on the basis of their stands on specific issues.

Facilitative and Interfering Effects of Visual Images on Verbal Information Processing

The preceding studies suggest that when verbal information can be evaluated easily using either holistic or piecemeal criteria, making salient visual images of the individual may influence the criterion that is applied. Similar considerations suggest that when the information is conducive to only one type of processing, visual images that are salient at the time could either facilitate or interfere with this processing, depending on the type of information involved.

A series of studies by Adaval and her colleagues (Adaval, Isbell, & Wyer, 2003; Adaval & Wyer, 1998) bear on this possibility. Based on earlier research by Pennington and Hastie (1986, 1988, 1992), Adaval and colleagues assumed that when information about a person or object is conveyed in the form of a narrative (i.e., a temporally related sequence of events), people would construct a story about the sequence of events as a whole and would base their judgments on the implications of the story without considering the implications of each individual event in isolation. In contrast, individuals who receive the same information in an unordered list might be more inclined to engage in piecemeal processing of each feature separately and to integrate its implications using a mechanistic computational strategy (cf. Anderson, 1971; Fishbein & Hunter, 1964). If this is so, and if pictures dispose individuals to employ a global processing strategy, they should facilitate the processing of the first type of information, leading the information to have more effect. However, pictures could interfere with processing of the second type of information, leading the information to have less impact.

Studies in both the political domain (Adaval et al., 2003) and consumer decision making (Adaval & Wyer, 1998) suggest that this is true. In two studies by Adaval et al. (2003), participants received information about the events that occurred in the course of a politician's career and were asked to form an impression of him. The information was conveyed in a brochure that began with a brief overview of the politician's career, followed by more specific descriptions of the events that had occurred. In one case, however, the information was conveyed in a narrative. For example, the brochure describing one politician ("Thomas Winters") began:

Thomas Winters was a well-known political figure between 1950 and 1975. He was a veteran of World War II and served as an executive of General Motors before becoming Governor of Michigan. He then served two years as a U. S. Senator, and ended his career as a special envoy to China.

This paragraph was followed by a series of paragraphs, each describing a different event that occurred during the politician's career and the point at which it occurred,

for example:

He left General Motors to become Governor of Michigan. There, he showed sensitivity to public interests. Upon assuming office, for example, he went on television to oppose the construction of a nuclear waste processing plant near Detroit that would contaminate the city's water supply.

Other activities included urging the government to halt the bombing in Vietnam, donating his summer home for use by a charitable organization, hosting the Pope during his visit to America, and helping to revise the state budget to provide support for crime prevention.

In contrast, the brochure, under list-format conditions, described the events in the politician's life in bullet form and did not indicate their temporal relatedness. Thus, the brochure pertaining to Winters began:

Thomas Winters was a well-known political figure between 1950 and 1970. He was:

- A member of the U. S. Senate
- A World War II veteran
- A General Motors executive
- Governor of Michigan
- Special envoy to China

Although the individual events were conveyed in the same order they were presented in narrative-format conditions, they were also conveyed in bullets that had no temporal implications:

- Was sensitive to the interests of the public while Governor of Michigan.
- Went on television to oppose the construction of a nuclear waste processing plant that would contaminate the city's water supply.

In some conditions, the verbal description of each life event was accompanied by a black-and-white photograph of the politician ostensibly engaged in activities related to the event (giving a speech, talking to someone, etc.) or, in some cases, the event itself. (Thus, for example, a statement that the politician had headed a committee to investigate how to decrease violent crime was accompanied by a picture of a policeman at the scene of a killing.) The pictures were taken from books and magazines. (Pictures of Henry Kissinger were used for one of the two politicians, and pictures of Robert McNamara were used for the other. Pretesting indicated that neither politician's face was familiar to the college student population from which participants were drawn.) Participants, after reading the brochures, reported their impressions of each politician along a scale from -5 (*very unfavorable*) to $+5$ (*very favorable*) and then recalled the events they had read about.

Evaluations of the politicians are shown in Table 8.3 as a function of information presentation format and the presence or absence of pictures. As these data show, participants in no-picture conditions evaluated politicians less favorably

TABLE 8.3
 Impressions of Politicians and Number of Events Recalled As a
 Function of Format, the Presence of Pictures, and Presentation Order

	<i>Narrative Format</i>	<i>List Format</i>
Impressions of politician		
Pictures	3.98	3.63
No pictures	3.58	3.95
Number of items recalled		
Pictures	5.79	4.92
No pictures	5.04	4.98

Note. Judgments are reported along a scale from -5 (*very unfavorable*) to 5 (*very favorable*). Based on data from Adaval et al., 2003, Experiment 1.

when the information about them was conveyed in a narrative than when it was listed. However, introducing pictures increased evaluations in the former condition and decreased it in the latter. As a result, evaluations of the politicians when pictures were presented were more favorable when the information was conveyed in a narrative than when it was listed. Although these differences were small in magnitude, the interaction of format and pictures was reliable ($p < .05$). As shown in the bottom half of Table 8.3, the number of events that participants recalled in each condition showed a similar pattern. This is consistent with the assumption that differences in processing difficulty mediated the effects we observed.

The information-processing strategies that underlie these effects may be activated and applied spontaneously, with little conscious awareness. This was suggested in a second study in which participants were explicitly told the strategy they should use. That is, participants in piecemeal-instruction conditions were told to “imagine the specific events that occurred in each politician’s life,” and to “use these individual events as a basis for your impression.” In contrast, participants under holistic-instruction conditions were told to “imagine each politician’s life as a whole and to use this as a basis for your impression.” Participants’ self-reports of the strategy they employed confirmed the assumption that they attempted to comply with these instructions. Nevertheless, participants’ candidate evaluations showed a pattern very similar to that observed in the first study. These data are summarized in Table 8.4. That is, pictures increased judgments based on information that was conveyed in a narrative and decreased the extremity of judgments based on information that was conveyed in a list, and these effects did not depend significantly on the criteria participants were told to use.

The interfering effects of pictures when verbal information was conveyed in a list may be limited to conditions in which the pictures accompany this information. If an image of a person or event is constructed before verbal information about it is received, as in the study by Wyer et al. (1991), this interference might not be apparent. This possibility was examined in an additional study by Adaval et al. (2003). The design of this experiment was similar to that of the earlier ones. In

TABLE 8.4
 Impressions of Politicians As a Function of Format, Task
 Demands, the Presence of Pictures, and Presentation Order

	<i>Narrative Format</i>	<i>List Format</i>
Holistic instructions		
Pictures	3.94	3.61
No pictures	3.46	4.03
Piecemeal instructions		
Pictures	3.76	3.12
No pictures	4.00	4.02
Mean		
Pictures	3.85	3.37
No pictures	3.73	4.03

Note. Judgments are reported along a scale from -5 (*very unfavorable*) to 5 (*very favorable*). Based on data from Adaval et al., 2003, Experiment 2.

this case, however, pictures of the politicians were presented at the beginning of the brochure, before the written descriptions of the candidate's life events were conveyed, rather than in the context of these events. Under these conditions, pictures tended to increase evaluations of the politicians regardless of the format in which the information was conveyed. Interestingly, this increase was particularly pronounced among individuals who typically were not disposed to form visual images spontaneously on the basis of verbal information. Participants who typically formed visual images apparently formed these images on their own without the aid of pictures, so the addition of these pictures had little effect.

These results suggest that stimulating people to form visual images of a person or object at one point in time can sometimes increase the influence of verbal information they receive later. In this regard, Nisbett and Ross (1980) have argued that concrete, imageable information about an object often has greater impact on judgments than abstract ("pallid") consensus information that objectively is more reliable. Moreover, this impact can often increase as time goes on (cf. Reyes, Thompson, & Bower, 1980). The results of the present study expand on this possibility. That is, pictures of a person or object at one point in time may increase the ability to imagine the events described by subsequent information about their referent, thereby concretizing these events and leading the events to have more impact than they otherwise would.

Implications for Images Conveyed in the Media

In the research described in this section, the visual information we presented concerned the same people to whom the verbal information pertained. However, it was not particularly relevant to an understanding of this information. Nevertheless, it had an impact on the way the verbal information was processed and the inferences that were drawn from on it. Thus, a political candidate's videotaped

speech that had no implications for his political orientation influenced the way in which descriptions of his issue stands were processed and the conclusions drawn from them. Pictures of a politician that were peripheral to the verbal descriptions of events in his life likewise influenced the inferences that recipients made about the politician on the basis of these events.

Communications about people in the media usually consist of both visual and verbal material, presented either simultaneously or at different times. The results we obtained suggest that even though the verbal descriptions of an individual might provide an accurate characterization of him or her, nonverbal components of media communications (presented either simultaneously or separately) can affect the impact of these descriptions. In other words, although the visual characterizations of a person and his or her activities might be intended solely to stimulate interest and provide enjoyment, it could actually influence the conclusions people draw from the verbal information about the person and the extent to which they are persuaded by it.

COMMUNICATING ABOUT MEDIA CONTENT: THE EFFECTS OF VERBAL CODINGS OF VISUAL INFORMATION ON MEMORY

Our discussion thus far has implications for the way in which visual stimuli of the sort people encounter in the media can influence the interpretation of verbal information to which it is often remotely relevant. However, the influence of visual and verbal information on one another can be reciprocal. In some instances, verbal descriptions of observations that people communicate to others, perhaps for the purpose of being entertaining, can later influence their memory for the events that were observed and, therefore, can potentially influence the impact of these events on judgments they make at a later point in time.

These possibilities are suggested indirectly by evidence that once people have made an initial judgment of a person or object, they often retrieve and use this judgment as a basis for later ones without consulting the information on which the first judgment was based (Carlston, 1980; Higgins & Lurie, 1983; Lingle & Ostrom, 1979; Sherman, Ahlm, Berman, & Lynn, 1978). More directly relevant is a study by Higgins and Rholes (1978). They showed that when people describe a person to someone who either likes or dislikes this person, they tend to tailor their communication to the values of the intended recipient. Once they have done so, however, they base their own liking for the person on the implications of the message they wrote, rather than on the original information they received about the person. Participants in the course of preparing their communication apparently formed a new representation of the person they were describing, and this representation was later retrieved from memory and used to attain goals to which it was relevant independently of the implications of the information on which it was based.

This possibility has potentially important implications for the issues of concern in this chapter. When people watch a movie or television show, they are likely to construct a mental representation of it that is coded in a modality similar to that in which it was presented (i.e., both visually and acoustically; see Wyer & Radvansky, 1999). Later, however, they may be called on to describe the events they saw to another. Alternatively, they may communicate their impressions of one or more of the characters. In doing so, they presumably encode their initial observations in terms of more abstract concepts that are relevant to the communication they are generating. If they are later asked to make judgments of the people or events conveyed in the original movie, they might retrieve and use this verbally coded representation in the course of communicating about it, without considering the original, nonverbally coded material. To this extent, their judgments may be less accurate than they would be if this more abstract representation had not been used.

Two studies by Adaval and Wyer (2003) examined these effects. Participants watched the initial 12-min segment of Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf*. The segment portrays an animated conversation between a man and woman after coming home from a late-night party. Some participants were told before watching the movie that they would later be asked to describe what went on, whereas others were told they would be asked to report their impressions of the protagonists. In two other conditions, participants were told at the outset to watch the movie as they would if they were seeing it in a theatre and were not informed of the task they were asked to perform until afterward. After watching the movie, participants in all four conditions were asked to spend 5 min either writing down what went on or describing their impressions, depending on the objective they had been assigned. Participants in a fifth, control condition did not receive specific objectives either before or after watching the movie and spent 5 min after watching the movie describing a typical day at school. After completing the writing task, all participants were then administered a recognition memory task in which they were asked to identify both things the protagonists said during the interaction or things they had done.

We expected that participants who watched the movie would form a detailed mental representation of it that (like the movie itself) was coded both visually and acoustically. However, when they later conveyed their impressions of the protagonists, or described the sequence of events that occurred, they presumably formed a semantically coded representation that was relevant to their communication objective. However, the features of this latter representation were likely to be coded more abstractly than features of the representation they had formed while watching the movie. Consequently, if participants use the representation as a basis for their recognition responses, they are likely to be less accurate than they would be if this abstract verbal representation had not been formed.

The content of the abstract representation that participants form, however, should depend on their communication objective. If participants are describing the sequence of events that occurred, both things the protagonists said and things they did are relevant. Consequently, protagonists' statements and their nonverbal

behaviors should both be depicted in the abstract representation they formed when they were asked to describe this sequence. We therefore expected that participants who had formed this representation would use it to verify both protagonists' statements and their behaviors, so their accuracy in identifying both types of items would be diminished relative to conditions in which they had not performed this task.

In contrast, suppose participants are describing their impressions of the protagonists. In the particular movie segment that participants observed, protagonists' statements were quite relevant to an understanding of their personality but their nonverbal behaviors were generally uninformative. Therefore, the representation that participants construct in the course of describing their impressions should convey the implications of things the protagonists said but not the things they did. If this is so, these participants should be likely to consider this representation to be a sufficient basis for verifying protagonists' statements but might resort to the less-accessible representation they had formed while watching the movie to verify nonverbal behaviors. Consequently, their accuracy in recognizing statements should be adversely affected, but their accuracy in recognizing nonverbal behaviors should not.

Results were largely consistent with these conjectures. The two studies differed primarily in the nature of the recognition task that the participants performed. In one experiment, recognition items were verbal descriptions of the things protagonists said and did along with an equivalent number of items that were not conveyed in the movie. In the second study, recognition items consisted of acoustic recordings of protagonists' actual utterances and visual frames extracted from the movie. The results of both studies are summarized in Table 8.5, which shows

TABLE 8.5
Effects of Communication Objectives and the Point At Which These
Objectives Were Induced on Recognition of Protagonists' Statements
and Nonverbal Behaviors

	<i>Experiment 1</i>		<i>Experiment 2</i>	
	<i>Statements</i>	<i>Behaviors</i>	<i>Statements</i>	<i>Behaviors</i>
Event-description objectives				
Induced before watching movie	-.189 ^a	-.360	-.070	-.046
Induced after watching movie	-.065	-.297	-.044	-.095
Impression-description objectives				
Induced before watching movie	.130	.000	.045	.046
Induced after watching movie	-.108	.021	-.022	.046

Note. Based on Adaval and Wyer (2003).
^aRecognition accuracy in Experiment 1 was based on a measure that controls for guessing (Hilgard, 1951). This measure could not be applied reliably in Experiment 2 because there were too few distracters. Consequently, accuracy in this study was inferred from the proportion of items that participants identified correctly. In each case, cell entries refer to differences between the accuracy obtained under each task-objective condition and accuracy observed in comprehension-only conditions.

the difference in recognition accuracy at each combination of task objectives and the time these objectives were induced and the accuracy under control conditions. Asking participants to communicate the sequence of events that occurred decreased their recognition accuracy relative to control conditions, and this was true regardless of when these objectives were induced. In contrast, asking participants to describe their impressions of the protagonists after watching the movie only decreased their accuracy of identifying things the protagonists said and did not appreciably influence their recognition of nonverbal behaviors. Moreover, the effects of impression-formation objectives were evident only when task objectives were induced after participants had watched the movie.²

More generally, these studies show not only that conclusions drawn from verbal information can be influenced by visual stimuli but also that memory for visually coded information can be influenced by verbal communications. In the studies we conducted, the events described in the visual material were fictitious. However, it is reasonable to suppose that similar effects could occur when people communicate about actual events they see on television. To this extent, not only may exposure to information in the entertainment media influence the impact of other information, but also communications about media content, perhaps for the purpose of being entertaining, can influence memory for the original events and, therefore, beliefs and attitudes to which the events are relevant.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Much of the information conveyed in the media is intended to entertain or to stimulate interest. This is particularly true of information that is conveyed in pictures or video vignettes. The research reviewed in this chapter suggests that this information can have an impact on how people think about verbal information they receive in either the same context or in different contexts and, therefore, the conclusions they draw from it. To this extent, it can have an impact on the attitudes

²The effects of inducing task objectives before participants watched the movie require further consideration. Participants are likely to include all of the statements and behaviors that they consider to be of sufficient interest to communicate to others in the representation they formed spontaneously in the course of comprehending what went on. Thus, the content of the representation that participants formed when they had an event-description objective was likely to be similar in content regardless of whether they were informed of this objective before or after they saw the movie, so the goal-specific representation they formed was also likely to be similar in the two cases. As this reasoning implies, describing the sequence of events that occurred decreased recognition accuracy, regardless of when participants were informed they would have to generate this description. In contrast, participants who expect to communicate their impressions of the participants may include things in the representation they form while watching the movie that are relevant to their impressions but would not be depicted in the representation they would form when they are only trying to comprehend what is going on. The implications of these additional features may then be included in the communication they generate later, and their recognition may benefit, as results suggest.

and beliefs that are formed from this information in ways in which recipients are often unaware and that the communicator may not always intend.

As we acknowledged at the outset, the research we have reported was not designed with the explicit intention of examining the impact of the media on attitudes, values, and behavior. Moreover, the effects we discussed were largely induced by situation-specific factors, the effects of which are likely to dissipate over time. As we have noted, however, frequent exposure to stimuli is likely to increase their chronic accessibility and, therefore, to have an influence that persists over time and situations. Enduring effects of the sort we have described nevertheless remain to be established. The work we have summarized suggests directions in which future research might take.

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The Power of Fiction: Determinants and Boundaries

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Entertainment media often present fictional portrayals of events, and individuals regularly alter their real-world beliefs in response to fictional communications (e.g., Green & Brock, 2000; Strange & Leung, 1999). Whereas marketing practitioners have seized on the selling potential inherent in entertainment media (e.g., with product placements in sitcoms and movies), psychologists are only beginning to understand the nature and mechanisms of fictional influence. In this chapter, we focus on entertainment programs themselves, rather than advertisements or persuasive messages per se. We offer an overview of research on the persuasive power of fictional communications and provide a conceptual framework for studying the effects of fiction and narrative. Evidence suggests that two mechanisms, low elaborative scrutiny and high experienced transportation, may underlie the influence of fictional communications. Furthermore, promising areas of research are outlined that begin to elucidate the boundary conditions under which fiction can have an influence and the factors that determine the staying power of that influence.

Nonfiction, with its pretension of veridicality, and fiction, with its patina of verisimilitude but no necessary pretension to accuracy, are popularly understood as distinct realms. However, research in a variety of domains shows that the fact-fiction distinction is overstated: Individuals may blur the boundaries between the real and the imaginary, as evidenced by the developmental study of children's mental theories of reality (Flavell, 1999), suggestibility of both children and adults

to false suppositions (Bruck & Ceci, 1999; Loftus, 1992), confusion between actual perceptions and thoughts in studies of reality monitoring (Johnson, 1998), and “making of fact” in news media, the courts, and novels (Bruner, 1998). The extent to which individuals integrate products of imagination into their real-world belief structures is of critical importance, yet this topic has received little attention in the persuasion domain.

Despite people’s immersion in narratives in their everyday lives, the study of narratives in persuasion contexts has been relatively neglected by psychological science. An authoritative reference in the field of persuasion and attitude change contains more than 60 pages of references but has no mention of the impact of narratives and fiction on attitude or belief change (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993). Research in persuasion has been skewed toward the investigation of rhetoric, or primarily fact-based advocacy messages, such as advertisements, speeches, and editorials, that contain arguments specifically designed to sway a reader to a particular position. The rare exceptions to this trend have suggested that narrative is a powerful form of communication (e.g., Adaval & Wyer, 1998; Deighton, Romer, & McQueen, 1989; Wyer, Adaval, & Colcombe, 2002). Outside of the persuasion arena, the power of a narrative format has been demonstrated by studies in several domains, ranging from jury decision making (Pennington & Hastie, 1988) to likelihood estimates (Gregory, Cialdini, & Carpenter, 1982). In the current conceptual review, we are interested in narratives because they are the primary vehicles for fiction. Although it is certainly possible to find instances of nonnarrative fiction, fiction is often isomorphic with narrative.

Together and separately, narratives and fiction have been underexplored by science, despite their prevalence in the lives of individuals and their importance for understanding domains such as consumer behavior. We review the evidence for the power of fiction and present a theoretical framework for investigating the effects of fiction. Our proposed framework suggests that elaborative scrutiny and the experience of being transported into a narrative world can affect how much influence is exerted by fictional communications.

FICTION MATTERS: BROADER IMPACT OF FICTIONAL COMMUNICATION

Understanding the conditions under which fiction can have an influence—and the staying power of that influence—is important for individuals interested in the intersection of entertainment media and consumer psychology for at least three broad reasons: the potential use of fiction to intentionally persuade, the prevention of persuasion via fiction when information is inaccurate or misleading, and the illumination of ways in which individuals negotiate the boundaries between imagination and reality. Theory-driven understanding of individuals’ responses to fiction helps to achieve all of these goals.

First, authors, educators, and media practitioners sometimes want individuals to gain information from works with fictional components. For instance, *Sesame Street* creates fictional situations but teaches children real information about numbers and letters. Entertainment-education programs have been useful in conveying family-planning information and other prosocial messages in developing nations (Slater, 2002). The first author is part of a research team developing a computer game (Heart Sense) to reduce prehospitalization delay for heart attack victims; the computer game conveys serious health information using the setting of a fictional village with fictional characters. Understanding the ways in which individuals might extract valuable real-world information from within a fictional setting is an important factor in determining or increasing the effectiveness of these entertainment media.

The second reason why fiction matters is the reverse of the first: Individuals may be persuaded when they should not be, such as when false information about a medical condition or treatment is presented in a fictional entertainment program. It may be dangerous or harmful if individuals come to believe false information as a result of persuasion via fiction. Similarly, it may be detrimental to a company if their product is presented in a misleading light. A related danger, as noted by Strange (2002), is that “a particular peril of stories is that they are equally good at communicating prototypical and atypical cases, and rarely announce how representative they are” (p. 279).

This perilous aspect of fiction’s power has gained the most attention in society at large; efforts to suppress fictional forms of expression are widespread (Strange, Green, & Brock, 2000). Interestingly, censors—including parents and school boards who attempt to ban books such as the *Harry Potter* series from classrooms and libraries—often assume that fiction can have harmful effects on attitudes and beliefs but do not have empirical support for this assumption (DeFattore, 2002).

A final reason for exploring fiction is to come to a deeper understanding of how individuals approach issues of reality and of truth. Understanding the range of circumstances under which individuals will accept information that may not be accurate is relevant beyond the persuasion domain. Creators of entertainment media will want to be cognizant of how likely their audience will be to accept information embedded in their fictional-based programs. Designers of virtual reality simulations may draw on understanding of the psychology of fiction and narrative engagement to enhance the reality of their simulations.

THE POWER OF FICTION: PERCEPTION AND REALITY

Cultural Default: Nonfiction and Fiction As Separate Realms?

Despite these important reasons to focus on how individuals interpret fictional communications, our cultural default may be to assume that nonfiction and fiction should be understood as distinct realms, with information gained from fiction

treated as at least potentially less reliable. Bookstores and libraries are divided into fiction and nonfiction sections. Journalists lose their jobs and professional reputations if they are caught fabricating parts of stories. Most entertainment products are clearly distinguished as fiction, such as a sitcom, or nonfiction, such as a news report, although the line between the two is becoming increasingly blurred (Bruner, 1998). It seems reasonable to think that we should learn more about the world from a newscast, which at least attempts to be an accurate reflection of real events, rather than from a television drama, which may engage in inordinate amounts of artistic license.

However, evidence *against* nonfiction's superior persuasiveness has been increasing in studies of narratives (e.g., Green & Brock, 2000; Murphy, 1998; Slater, 1990). For example, Strange and Leung (1999) showed that narratives labeled as news (nonfiction) or as fiction had equivalent influence on readers' perceptions of a social problem. Green and Brock (2000) showed that both specific and general beliefs were affected by exposure to a narrative, regardless of whether the narrative was labeled as nonfiction or fiction. On a larger scale, the cultivation literature suggests that repeated exposure to fictional television programs can create a view of the world as dangerous (e.g., Gerbner & Gross, 1976; Shrum, Wyer, & O'Guinn, 1998).

Automatic Acceptance

Additional psychological evidence suggests that individuals do not always separate information into tidy categories, accepting one and rejecting the other. For example, following Spinozan philosophy, Gilbert (1991) proposed that the default response to information is to initially believe every assertion encountered. His experiments (in a nonnarrative context) indicated that individuals may later discount information that is known to have come from a false source, but immediate assent is a relatively automatic process in response to information comprehension. Correction for inaccurate information may generally occur without difficulty, but if a person is prevented from engaging in correction processes, the belief may persevere (Gilbert, Krull, & Malone, 1990; Gilbert, Tafarodi, & Malone, 1993). Similarly, Gerrig (1993) claimed that individuals do not automatically create a separate mental category for fictional information, as compared with factual communication.

In a related vein, Reeves and Nass (1996) suggested that "the automatic response is to accept what seems to be real as in fact real" (p. 8). Prentice and colleagues (Prentice, Gerrig, & Bailis, 1997) found that people accepted false assertions, such as "chocolate helps you lose weight" and "mental illness is contagious," if those assertions were embedded in fictional narratives (Wheeler, Green, & Brock, 1999). The findings that people are susceptible to assertions embedded in a narrative may be extended, for example, to product endorsements contained within entertainment programs. If people either do not want to or are not able to separate out fictional information from nonfictional information, they may be affected by it.

WHAT IS FICTION? RECOGNITION AND TRUTH STATUS

Recognition of Fictional Context

In some instances, individuals may be persuaded by fiction because they do not know, do not believe, or do not remember that the information is fictional. (See Strange, 2002, for a full discussion of these modes of context failure and Johnson, 1998, for a discussion of reality monitoring.) For example, a reader may miss a disclaimer that a story is a work of fiction or may not accept an author's claim that resemblance to real persons and places is coincidental. Furthermore, there are forms of media where nonfiction and fiction are becoming blurred, such as docudramas or narratives based on a true story. Although these context failures and mixed formats are interesting in their own right, they are beyond the scope of the current review. Our conceptual analysis addresses cases where individuals are fully aware that they are reading a fictional work.

Fiction Versus Falsehood

Even when a work is clearly identified as fiction, investigations of fictional impact are made more complex by the nature of fiction as a category. Fiction is most often defined as an imaginative work that is not necessarily true. Some authors of fiction might engage in extensive research so that, even if the characters in their stories never actually lived, the places and historical events surrounding them match reality. (A recent book, *Novel History* [Carnes, 2001], brings together historians and novelists to discuss exactly this issue.) Accepting information from a fictional source may not constitute an error in judgment if the focal information is reliable. However, some authors may not be constrained by actual history and may make up people and places with abandon. In practice, there is a huge continuum in the accuracy of presented information, ranging from minor changes in details that serve to increase entertainment value to playing very loose with facts (e.g., Carnes, 2001). For example, Oliver Stone's film *JFK* was widely criticized for ignoring the historical record, whereas the television drama *E.R.* has been praised for the accuracy of its medical information. Without consulting external references, a reader often has no solid basis for determining what information translates to the real world and what should remain in the realm of fantasy.

FICTION AS A CUE TO PROCESSING STYLE

We propose that either fiction or narrative may serve as a cue to a reader to engage in a less-critical, more immersive form of mental engagement. The idea that stories are treated differently from scientific or logical argument, and may be held to different truth standards than rhetorical messages, is not new (see, e.g., Bruner,

1986). Prentice and Gerrig (1999) suggested that fiction tends to be processed nonsystematically and that fiction has its greatest influence when readers respond experientially rather than rationally. From a cognitive perspective, Zwaan (1994) found that *genre expectations*—being told a passage was a news story versus an excerpt from a novel—affected the types of mental representations formed by readers. Readers who believed they were reading a literary work had longer reading times and a better representation of surface information, such as the exact words used by the author, whereas those who thought they were reading a news story had better recall of situational information, indicating a deeper level of representation. However, the effects of these different processing styles have not been systematically explored in the domain of attitude change.

We further propose that this less-critical processing of fiction may take an unengaged or engaged form. In the unengaged form of fictional processing, an individual may simply refrain from critical or evaluative processing (see Prentice & Gerrig, 1999). The person may be focused on relaxation, may feel that the material is not particularly important, or may simply wish to be distracted or passively entertained (see Brock & Livingston, this volume). Thus, he or she may be passively influenced by the communication. The engaged form of fictional processing is what Green and Brock (2000) have termed *transportation into a narrative world*, as described in the next section.

Unengaged Form of Fictional Processing: Low Elaborative Scrutiny

There is some empirical evidence (Garst, Green, & Brock, 2000) suggesting that fiction/nonfiction labeling may affect how individuals process information. Within the framework of a dual-process model of persuasion (elaboration likelihood model; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty & Wegener, 1998), Garst et al. (2000) exposed participants to a rhetorical persuasive message (a speech) about a university policy requiring essay examinations for seniors. Approximately half of the participants read a speech containing arguments that an independent pretest sample had rated as relatively strong and convincing (e.g., “studying for essay exams fosters better quality learning”). The other half read a speech containing arguments pretested to be weaker and less compelling (e.g., “teachers take longer to grade essay exams”). Pilot testing confirmed that both strong and weak messages could be credibly presented as fact or fiction.

Participants in the fact condition read a transcript, formatted in two columns and credited to TV (channel) 8 News. The following introduction was used: “The speech you will be assessing was . . . recently given by John Nelson . . . on a live television broadcast . . . the speaker . . . is a real person and the speech transcript is factual.” Participants in the fiction condition read a script, formatted in a single column and credited to the American Television Writers’ Guild. The following

introduction was used:

The speech you will be assessing was created as part of a fictional television drama. The actor giving the speech plays the part of John Nelson . . . on a made-for-television drama . . . The character . . . is not real nor is the speech real. In fact, the television writers totally made up the speech in order to further develop the plot line of the drama.

Participants' need for cognition (Cacioppo, Petty, & Kao, 1984), their dispositional tendency to enjoy and engage in effortful thought, was also measured.

Results revealed that both high and low need-for-cognition participants scrutinized the message labeled as fact (i.e., participants' attitudes and thoughts were responsive to whether they read strong or weak arguments), but only participants who were high in need for cognition scrutinized the fictional message. It appears that, under some circumstances, individuals are less likely to ponder information reported to be fiction than they are fact. An important implication of these results is that imagination-based assertions may have a substantial effect on attitudes because people are accepting information labeled as fiction without careful scrutiny. Of course, this fiction-labeled information could easily include commercial appeals.

Interestingly, in the Garst et al. (2000) research, both fact- and fiction-labeled messages changed attitudes, and, indeed, fiction was as effective as fact in persuading students to support the new exam policy. Fact and fiction differences manifested themselves in how much readers scrutinized the information, not by how persuasive the information was. That is, fact and fiction did not differ in their overall effects on attitude change.

The parity of influence by messages labeled as fact and fiction could not be attributed to an unsuccessful instantiation of the fact/fiction label or to insufficient power to detect the effect. Recipients had good recall of the fact/fiction label of the messages they read. Furthermore, because messages labeled as fiction were persuasive even when the position being advocated (mandatory essay exams) was both pertinent to the college student participants, and contrary to their initial attitudes, the power of fictional framing does not appear to be limited to topics or advocacies that are irrelevant or agreeable.

Engaged Form of Fictional Processing: Transportation Into Narrative Worlds

Recent research by Green and Brock (2000) focused on the phenomenological experience of being absorbed in a story—a process called transportation into a narrative world—as a mechanism of narrative impact (see also Gerrig, 1993). Most people have had the sensation of being “lost in a book” (Neill, 1988), swept up into the world of a story so completely that they forget the world around them.

Instead of being aware of their physical surroundings, transported readers see the action of the story unfolding before them. They react emotionally to events that are simply words on a page. Transportation resembles flow, or optimal experience (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990).

A transported individual is cognitively and emotionally involved in the story and may experience vivid mental images tied to the story's plot. Green and Brock (2000) developed and validated a scale to measure the extent of transportation experienced by readers and conducted a series of studies demonstrating that highly transported individuals showed more story-consistent beliefs on both story-specific and general attitudinal measures than did individuals who were less transported. Transportation was also associated with increased positivity toward sympathetic characters and a reduction in negative thoughts in response to the story.

Although most of the studies of transportation to date use written materials, the experience of transportation is not limited to the reading of written material. Narrative worlds are broadly defined with respect to modality; the term *reader* may be construed to include listeners, viewers, or any recipient of narrative information. Thus, transportation theory (Green & Brock, 2000, 2002) is broadly applicable to most entertainment media: books, television, radio, and computer-based stories.

How does the phenomenological experience of being "lost in a book" translate into belief change?

First, transportation may aid in suspension of disbelief and reduction of counterarguing about the issues raised in the story. If individuals are putting aside real-world facts, they may not use these facts to contradict implications of the narrative. The mental correction literature suggests that individuals need both motivation and ability to correct beliefs based on untrue, inaccurate, or incomplete information (e.g., Gilbert, 1991; Gilbert et al., 1993). The reduction of negative cognitive responding resulting from transportation could be due to ability factors—the person's mental resources are so engaged in experiencing the story that they are not able to disbelieve story conclusions. Transportation's reduction of counterarguing could also be based on motivation—if people are being swept along by an exciting tale, interrupting it to counterargue story points would destroy the pleasure of the experience. Even after finishing a narrative, individuals may not be motivated to go back and evaluate the implications of the story, especially if they do not believe the story has had any effect on them (e.g., Perloff, 1999). This reduction of counterarguing may also allow product-related information contained in an entertainment context to influence viewers. Transported individuals may be less likely to critically evaluate the products and product claims found within the narrative world.

The traditional means of assessing acceptance of a rhetorical passage is through the use of cognitive responses (Petty, Ostrom, & Brock, 1981). After reading a persuasive message or story, participants list all thoughts, positive or negative, about the message. In our studies (Green & Brock, 2000), however, thought listings did not seem to provide a sensitive measure of unfavorable responses individuals

had while reading the narratives. To address this concern, we created a new measure of story acceptance/rejection called Pinocchio Circling. Once participants had finished reading the narrative, they were instructed to go back over the story and circle any "false notes," or parts of the story that did not ring true to them. False notes were described as something in the story that contradicts a fact or does not make sense. The instructions explained that sometimes authors leave clues when they are being untruthful, just as Pinocchio's nose grew after he told a lie. For narrative communication, identification of false notes may be roughly analogous to counterarguing for rhetorical communication.

We hypothesized that participants who were more transported into the story would be less likely to find false notes in the story; they would be less critical of the story. If highly transported participants showed less false noting, this finding would be supportive of the idea that transportation is correlated with reduced critical thinking and counterarguing. In our studies, there were no right or wrong answers for this task. Pinocchio Circling was intended to be simply a measure of participants' own acceptance or rejection of parts of the story.

Results using this measure supported our theorizing; for example, in a study using a story about a little girl murdered by a psychiatric patient (adapted from Nuland, 1994), highly transported participants circled significantly fewer false notes than their less-transported counterparts. Pinocchio Circling may prove to be a meaningful and sensitive measure of cognitive processing of narrative texts.

Another means by which transportation may affect beliefs is by making narrative events seem more like personal experience. Research has shown that direct experience with attitude objects can result in strong and enduring attitudes (Fazio & Zanna, 1981). If a reader or viewer feels as if he or she has been part of narrative events, the lessons implied by those events may seem more powerful. Work on source monitoring suggests that imagined events may be misremembered as real to the extent that the memories have qualities similar to real memories—for example, concreteness and vivid detail (Johnson, Hashtroudi, & Lindsay, 1993). Narratives, particularly ones into which readers have become transported, are likely to meet those criteria.

Recent advances in virtual reality technology provide a fertile avenue for increased exploration of the transportation mechanism. Individuals transported into imaginary worlds where they can interact with their environments on a physical and sensory level may show even greater belief change. Of course, researchers are still attempting to perfect techniques that allow an increased sense of presence in virtual worlds (Biocca, 2002).

Finally, one effect of transportation is to create strong feelings toward characters in a narrative. Because the narrative world becomes real to a transported individual, sympathetic characters may come to seem like friends, fellow travelers on an adventure. By the same token, readers may develop a passionate hatred of story villains. This attachment to characters may play a critical role in narrative-based belief change and thus may serve as another route by which transportation leads

to belief change. Source credibility is usually an external “given” in persuasive communications (see Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Hass, 1981); however, for narrative communications, attachment to a protagonist may be an important determinant of the persuasiveness of a story. If a viewer likes or identifies with a particular character, statements made by the character or implications of events experienced by that character may carry special weight. This attachment may extend to objects or consumer products used by (or praised by) protagonists; viewers may form more positive attitudes toward the products through this association.

RESPONDING TO FICTION: JUDGMENT CRITERIA

Even though individuals may not critically evaluate every assertion in a fictional work (due to either the unengaged or engaged form of fictional processing, or both), readers nonetheless have standards by which to judge a fictional work. Fictional information must be compelling in some way for readers to accept the information.

Plausibility Criterion

Oatley (1999) claimed that fiction “may be twice as true as fact” (p. 101). This statement is based on the idea of fictional narratives as mental simulations, where one definition of truth is coherence within a complex structure. Oatley also noted that personal insight is another type of truth that may emerge from a story, even one that does not reflect empirical reality. His ideas appear to capture naive theories of fiction; readers confronted with a work of fiction may be less concerned with its objective truth status (whether the events described actually occurred) and more concerned with whether the work meets some plausibility criterion (realistic characters, settings, or sensible ideas). It is expected that people’s appraisal of a narrative as realistic (or not) will have an impact on the narrative’s influence (see Busselle & Greenberg, 2000, for a recent review of judgments about television realism). Instead of assuming that introducing materials as nonfictional or fictional would make all readers think the narratives are real or less real, the audience’s perception of the perceived plausibility of the stimulus should be taken into account.

BOUNDARY CONDITIONS ON EFFECTS OF FICTION

As noted previously, an increasing body of evidence suggests that fictional information is often integrated into real-world belief structures. We suggest that both factors internal and external to the narrative or message, as well as factors that arise from an interaction between internal and external forces, may help determine whether fictional information is accepted or rejected. Internal factors may include the type

of information given within the text, such as context details versus context-free assertions (see later discussion) or the ease with which information is compared with real-world facts. External factors may include information about the message, prior beliefs of the reader, explicit information about the validity of assertions contained in the narrative, or circumstances that might motivate readers to be especially critical in their approach to the material. Factors such as familiarity with the narrative content arise from an interaction of factors external to the text (prior knowledge of the reader) and internal to the text (content). We review a subset of these factors.

Context Details Versus Context-Free Assertions

In their discussion of narrative fiction, Gerrig and Prentice (1991) distinguish between context details and context-free assertions. Context details are setting elements that are particular to the fictional world and that tend not to be integrated into real-world belief structures. For example, changing the name of the president of the United States in a fictional work is unlikely to affect real-world political beliefs.

On the other hand, context-free assertions are more general claims that are not bound to particular settings. For example, Gerrig and Prentice's (1991) experimental narrative included the (false) statements that "chocolate helps you lose weight" and "mental illness is contagious." This type of information could theoretically apply to the real world as well as to the story world and thus would be more likely to have an impact on real-world beliefs. Gerrig and Prentice found significantly slower reaction times when identifying context-free assertions presented in the story but no such interference effect for context details. The reaction time data indicated that the false context-free assertions from the story were interfering with the verification of real-world facts, suggesting that fictional information had been incorporated into long-term memory. Thus, Gerrig and Prentice concluded that fictional context-free assertions, but not fictional context details, tend to be integrated into real-world knowledge.

Work by Green and Brock (2000) suggests that context-free information need not necessarily take the form of an assertion in the story for it to influence beliefs. For example, a story that implies that the world is an unjust place can affect just-world beliefs (Rubin & Peplau, 1975), even if the author or characters do not specifically assert that life is not fair. Lessons drawn from the events in a narrative or the experiences of the characters can have the same effects as context-free assertions. The boundary conditions for the power of context-free narrative implication, as well as narrative assertion, remain relatively unexplored.

Relevance

In the persuasion literature, enhanced personal relevance is a classic manipulation to encourage increased scrutiny of persuasive messages (Petty & Cacioppo, 1979, 1990). The elaboration likelihood perspective (e.g., Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) states

that individuals might be most likely to take source information into account—accepting nonfictional information but rejecting fictional information—under conditions of high personal relevance. However, studies by Garst et al. (2000) using persuasive speeches containing strong and weak arguments advocating changes in exam formats found no differences in the persuasive power of factual/fictional source labeling, even under high personal relevance. The effects of personal or self-relevance on the acceptance of fiction remain to be tested with narrative materials.

Familiarity

Slater (1990) found that ostensibly nonfictional written messages tended to influence readers' beliefs about category group members' characteristics to a greater extent than ostensibly fictional ones. However, this trend only occurred when the social category was relatively familiar (e.g., Contra guerrillas and English gentleman farmers). When the category was unfamiliar (e.g., Eritrean guerrillas and Dutch gentleman farmers in Java), the impact of the fictional message was equal to or greater than that of the nonfictional message.

Similarly, Prentice et al. (1997) found that fictional persuasion only occurred when the story was set at a distant campus rather than at the participants' own university. In the Prentice et al. study, weakly supported claims were embedded in the narrative. The authors claimed that familiar settings evoked cognitive scrutiny that would lead to the rejection of these tenuous propositions. However, Wheeler et al. (1999) failed to replicate the home-away difference in fictional persuasion. Instead, these investigators found persuasion via fiction in both home-school and away-school conditions. The status of familiarity of settings, groups, and topics as a boundary condition on fictional influence remains uncertain.

The boundary conditions we have discussed here—context-free assertions versus context details, personal relevance, and familiarity—are a subset of possible boundary conditions on fiction's influence. Given the accumulating evidence for the broad scope of fiction's power, extending our knowledge of possible limits on fictional influence would be useful for both researchers and persuasion practitioners.

STRENGTH OF ATTITUDE AND BELIEF CHANGE VIA NARRATIVES AND FICTION

The boundary conditions described previously suggest when fiction might be more or less likely to affect beliefs. Another key question is the nature of the beliefs or attitudes that are created through fiction. Not all attitudes are created equal; some types of attitude change may be transient, whereas others are more long lasting. Green and Brock (2000) suggested that narrative-based belief change may be relatively persistent over time and resistant to counterpersuasion. They base this claim

on findings that narratives are a preferred mental structure for storing and retrieving information (e.g., Schank & Abelson, 1995) and on the idea that narratives are able to effectively bring together both cognitive and affective contributions to attitude change. Attitudes and beliefs that have both cognitive and emotional foundations have been shown to be more persistent (Rosselli, Skelly, & Mackie, 1995). Finally, narratives may have the additional benefit of creating mental images, which can re-evolve story themes and messages when recalled (see Green & Brock, 2002). These qualities of narrative-based attitudes may also increase other aspects of attitude strength.

The prediction about the effects of fiction labeling, *per se*, is less clear. One possibility is that attitudes changed by a communication labeled as fictional will be equally as strong as those changed by a message labeled as nonfiction. Research to date has shown that in the majority of cases, individuals do not discount fictional information at the time of reading. It may be that the parity between nonfiction and fiction extends to attitude strength as well. An alternative hypothesis is that differences between nonfiction and fiction may not emerge as differences on evaluations or attitudes but, rather, may show up in attitude strength measures. Individuals may be less certain of or confident in their beliefs if those beliefs were formed by reading a message (narrative or nonnarrative) labeled as fiction. Additionally, if fiction promotes less careful scrutiny of the presented information, the attitude that will result will be weaker and less able to withstand subsequent counterpropaganda (see Petty, Haugtvedt, & Smith, 1995, for a review).

CONCLUSION

Although the relative strength of attitudes changed by fiction and narrative remains an open question, it is clear that individuals regularly alter their real-world beliefs and attitudes in response to fictional communications (Garst et al., 2000; Green & Brock, 2000; Prentice et al., 1997; Slater, 1990; Strange & Leung, 1999; Wheeler et al., 1999). Despite the prevalence of fiction in everyday life, there has been relatively little empirical investigation of how individuals may be influenced by products of imagination. Similarly, individuals often shift their beliefs in response to stories or narratives, yet persuasion researchers have paid much more attention to traditional persuasive messages, such as editorials or advertisements.

In their recent review of the use of dual-process models (elaboration likelihood model, Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; heuristic-systematic model, Chaiken, Liberman, & Eagly, 1989) to explore distinctions between fictional and nonfictional communication, Prentice and Gerrig (1999) wrote they "have been hesitant to embrace either of these [dual-process] models, however, because neither of them seems to capture the phenomenological experience of reading (or hearing or viewing) a work of fiction" (p. 543). Our theoretical framework attempts to capture that experience. We reviewed evidence that low elaborative

scrutiny (unengaged form of fictional processing) and high experienced transportation (engaged form of fictional processing) can affect fictional communications' power to change beliefs and attitudes. Furthermore, we outlined promising areas of research that begin to elucidate the boundary conditions under which fiction can have an influence and the factors that determine the staying power of that influence.

Our analysis confirms what censors have suspected for centuries—that fiction can be a powerful tool for shaping attitudes and opinions. Stories are especially influential when we become drawn into them—when our cognitive resources, our emotions, and our mental imagery faculties are engaged. It is important that we begin to explore the full range of implications of the pervasive influence of fictional work (Green, Strange, & Brock, 2002).

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A Process Model of Consumer Cultivation: The Role of Television Is a Function of the Type of Judgment

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Bring up the issue of media effects in any group and it is likely to unleash a torrent of opinions. Virtually everyone has their own theory. This is true regardless of whether the group is composed of academics, business folks, or members of the PTA. Moreover, people tend to hold their theories with pretty high confidence and are often willing to vociferously defend their positions. But why is this so? Perhaps one reason is experience. Everyone, regardless of their profession or hobby, has extensive experience with both the independent and dependent variables. That is, (virtually) everyone watches television (most watch it a lot), listens to the radio, or reads magazines and newspapers. Likewise, everyone makes countless judgments on a daily basis: developing beliefs, forming or reinforcing attitudes, updating personal values, constructing perceptions. A second reason may be that consistent empirical evidence of media effects has been remarkably difficult to pin down. Although the body of evidence is mounting to support the notion that the media have a moderate if not a strong effect on individual judgments (e.g., see Comstock, this volume), there seems to be just enough confounding or conflicting data to call these findings into question and keep alive the debate as to whether the media's influence is that substantial at all.

We would like to suggest a third reason as to why there seems to be little consensus on whether media effects are either prevalent or strong, a reason that may directly relate to the previous two: a lack of understanding of the processes that underlie media effects. With respect to lay opinions about the existence and strength

of media effects, the link between media exposure and individual judgments may not be clear because the processes that are involved in these relations are not clear. Most people are unaware of the underlying causes of their thoughts, feelings, and behaviors, much of which occurs relatively unconsciously (Bargh, 1997; Erdelyi & Zizak, this volume). Despite this, most people cling to the notion that their decisions are willful and for the most part conscious. Consequently, the lack of awareness of the effects of a potential input, such as media consumption, on people's judgments may contribute to their disbelief in the efficacy of media effects.

The lack of understanding of the processes underlying media effects has also hampered academic research. This is especially true for research on the effects of television viewing, particularly for research that has attempted to test cultivation theory (Gerbner & Gross, 1976; for reviews, see Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & Shanahan, 2002; Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). Just as everyday conversations regarding media effects can be intense, so can academic debates on the same issue. Indeed, these debates on media effects in general and cultivation effects in particular have spawned almost a cottage industry of replies and rejoinders in the premier academic journals (for a review, see Shanahan & Morgan, 1999). For almost every effect reported (or so it seems), an alternative explanation or a reanalysis of the data has been forthcoming. But as we have argued elsewhere (Burroughs, Shrum, & Rindfleisch, 2002; Shrum, 1995, 2002), an understanding of the processes that underlie media effects has the potential to reconcile conflicting findings and interpretations. That is, a process focus would suggest that conditions may exist that either facilitate or inhibit particular media effects, and the presence or absence of these conditions across studies may contribute to these inconsistent findings.

In this chapter, we focus on a particular media effect (the cultivation effect) and attempt to articulate a process model that can account for a variety of effects within the cultivation paradigm. In keeping with the theme of the book, we look at some of the unintended persuasion effects that may occur through the consumption of entertainment media, such as television. In the course of developing a model to explain these effects, we look specifically at the role of television programming in the shaping of product perceptions and the desire for these products, suggesting that television at the least has an influence on primary (product category) demand if not selective (brand) demand.

A PROCESS MODEL OF CULTIVATION EFFECTS

Cultivation Theory

Cultivation theory is a broad theory that relates media content with particular outcomes. The theory has two components. The first is that the content of television programs—whether they be “fiction,” such as soap operas, or “fact,” such as

news—presents a systematic distortion of reality.¹ That is, the world as it is portrayed on television differs in important and sometimes dramatic ways from how the real world is constituted. For example, the world of television tends to be more affluent (O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997), more violent (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980), more maritally unfaithful (Lichter, Lichter, & Rothman, 1994), and more populated with doctors, lawyers, and police officers (DeFleur, 1964; Head, 1954; Lichter et al., 1994; Smythe, 1954) than the real world. The second component is that frequent exposure to these distorted images results in their internalization: The more people watch television, the more they develop values, attitudes, beliefs, and perceptions that are consistent with the world as it is portrayed on television. The internalization of the television message may result in the learning of television "facts": TV viewing has been shown to be positively correlated with estimates of the number of doctors, lawyers, and police officers in the real world (Shrum, 1996, 2001), the prevalence of violence (Gerbner et al., 1980; Shrum, Wyer, & O'Guinn, 1998), and the prevalence of ownership of expensive products (O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997; Shrum, 2001). In addition, internalization can take the form of learning the "lessons" of television: Heavy television viewing has been shown to be associated with greater anxiety and fearfulness (Bryant, Carveth, & Brown, 1981), greater faith in doctors (Volgy & Schwarz, 1980), greater pessimism about marriage (Shrum, 1999b), and greater interpersonal mistrust (Gerbner et al., 1980; Shrum, 1999b).

Research on aspects of the cultivation effect has been a contentious area. Although studies supporting cultivation theory are not in short supply, there have been a number of critiques of cultivation, including critiques of theory, method, analysis, and interpretation (cf. Hirsch, 1980; Hughes, 1980; Newcomb, 1978). These critiques, though having some validity, have been dealt with at length elsewhere (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1994; Morgan & Shanahan, 1996; Shanahan & Morgan, 1999; Van den Bulck, 2003). Suffice it to say that the critiques revolve around trade-offs in the measurement of the independent variable, television viewing, and consequent issues of causal direction. Gerbner and colleagues (Gerbner et al., 2002) take the position that measurement of television viewing best captures their concept of cultivation. More specifically, it better approximates

¹ We put *fact* and *fiction* in quotes to signify that, like the topic of the book, the lines between what is fact and fiction is quite blurry. On the one hand, soap operas are clearly fictional in the technical sense, but they also hold some grain of truth, or at least ring true to some degree. On the other hand, news programs presumably present factual information, yet content analyses consistently show that news presentations can be significantly distorted, for example emphasizing dramatic crimes such as murder and other violence and tending to show African Americans and Latinos as criminals more often than base rates would suggest is representative (Dixon & Linz, 2000). In the middle is reality TV, which shows heavily edited but nevertheless actual footage of such things as crime and police response. But just as with the editing process for news, selective editing tends to portray certain races or classes of people (e.g., Black and Hispanic characters) as criminal suspects more often than as police officers, whereas the opposite is true for white characters (Oliver, 1994).

a pattern of viewing over years because television, in their view, tends to be a fairly habitual process, and thus measurement of viewing provides more validity than does a brief exposure to a particular stimulus (e.g., a program segment, an entire program, or even a series of programs) under experimental conditions. Others point out that the resulting correlational data leave causality ambiguous. Indeed, most of the critiques of cultivation revolve around third-variable or reverse causality explanations (Hirsch, 1980; Hughes, 1980; Zillmann, 1980). Experiments have been used to address these causal issues (for a review, see Ogles, 1987). However, experiments can be criticized because they may provide only a short exposure to particular television or film content, which may not fully capture the long-term nature of cultivation.

Two important (and somewhat interrelated) reasons for the contentious debate regarding the reliability and validity of the cultivation effect are that the effects have been, for the most part, small ones, and the effects have not always consistently obtained. Moreover, when they have obtained, implementation of certain statistical controls (e.g., demographics, activities outside the home, population size) has been shown to reduce the cultivation effect to nonsignificance in some instances (cf. Hirsch, 1980; Hughes, 1980). Indeed, meta-analyses of studies investigating the cultivation effect find an overall correlation coefficient of about .09, and this relation tends to vary slightly, but not significantly, across various demographic and situational variables (Morgan & Shanahan, 1996). The issues of small effect size and lack of reliability make cultivation effects particularly vulnerable to claims that the noted effects are spurious. That is, some other unmeasured variable may easily account for the entire relation between television viewing and judgments when the effects sizes are small.

The issue of small effect sizes has been addressed through a variety of arguments. First, small effect sizes, if real, are not trivial. As Gerbner et al. (2002) note, there are many instances in which a very small shift on some variable (e.g., global warming, voting behavior) has important consequences. Variables such as violence and aggression likely fall into this category as well (Bushman & Anderson, 2001). Second, and more pertinent to the focus of this chapter, small main effects may simply be masking larger effects within certain groups. This notion formed the basis of Gerbner et al.'s (1980) refinements to cultivation theory that introduced the concepts of mainstreaming and resonance, which postulated that direct experience variables may moderate the cultivation effect (see also Shrum & Bischak, 2001). This notion also forms the basis of our focus on psychological processes: Variables that affect the judgment processes may also moderate the cultivation effect.

Psychological Processes and Cultivation

The debate over measurement and causality long predates the issues raised within the context of cultivation theory, and it seems unlikely that it will be resolved anytime soon. We tend to agree with both sides—measurement of television viewing

best captures the effects of viewing over time, but the resulting correlational data are always open to alternative explanations. However, as we have argued elsewhere (Shrum, 1995, 1999c, 2002), there may be a method to retain the traditional practice of measuring television viewing yet bolster the confidence one has that the data can speak to the issue of causality. This method involves the development of a psychological process model of cultivation effects. The logic is that if a process model of cultivation effects could be developed and validated—one that specifies testable propositions and lays out a set of mediators and moderators of the relation between television viewing and judgments—then we can be much more confident that the observed relations represent true rather than spurious effects (Hawkins & Pingree, 1990; Shrum, 2002). For example, a testable model should provide a series or set of conditions under which a particular effect does or does not hold. The power of this model, then, is in the pattern of results that is produced across studies. Thus, even though a particular study may have alternative explanations that cannot be completely addressed, these alternative explanations would have to address the entire pattern of results to effectively refute the findings.

In the remainder of this chapter, we discuss our efforts in developing such a model. We first provide a brief overview of the model that has been developed to date and then offer an extension of this model. In doing so, we discuss some recent data that support key portions of this extension.

HEURISTIC PROCESSING MODEL OF CULTIVATION EFFECTS

The heuristic processing model of cultivation effects (Shrum, 1996, 1999c, 2002; Shrum et al., 1998) represents an initial attempt at developing a model of the mental processes that underlies cultivation effects. Figure 10.1 provides a flow diagram of the model. A more detailed account of the components of this model can be found in the literature just cited. For our purposes, we simply want to highlight certain features of the model, particularly with respect to the assumptions, general propositions, and limitations.

Assumptions of the Model

Types of Cultivation Judgments. To understand both the contribution and the limitations of the model, it is necessary to understand that a variety of dependent variables (judgments) have been used to test for cultivation effects. Hawkins and Pingree (1982) first noted that the types of judgments used to test for cultivation effects could conveniently be categorized into two groups: demographic and value-system measures. These measures have also been termed first-order and second-order measures, respectively (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1986). *Demographic or first-order measures* pertain to those that relate to the facts of television and the social world—those aspects of the television world that can

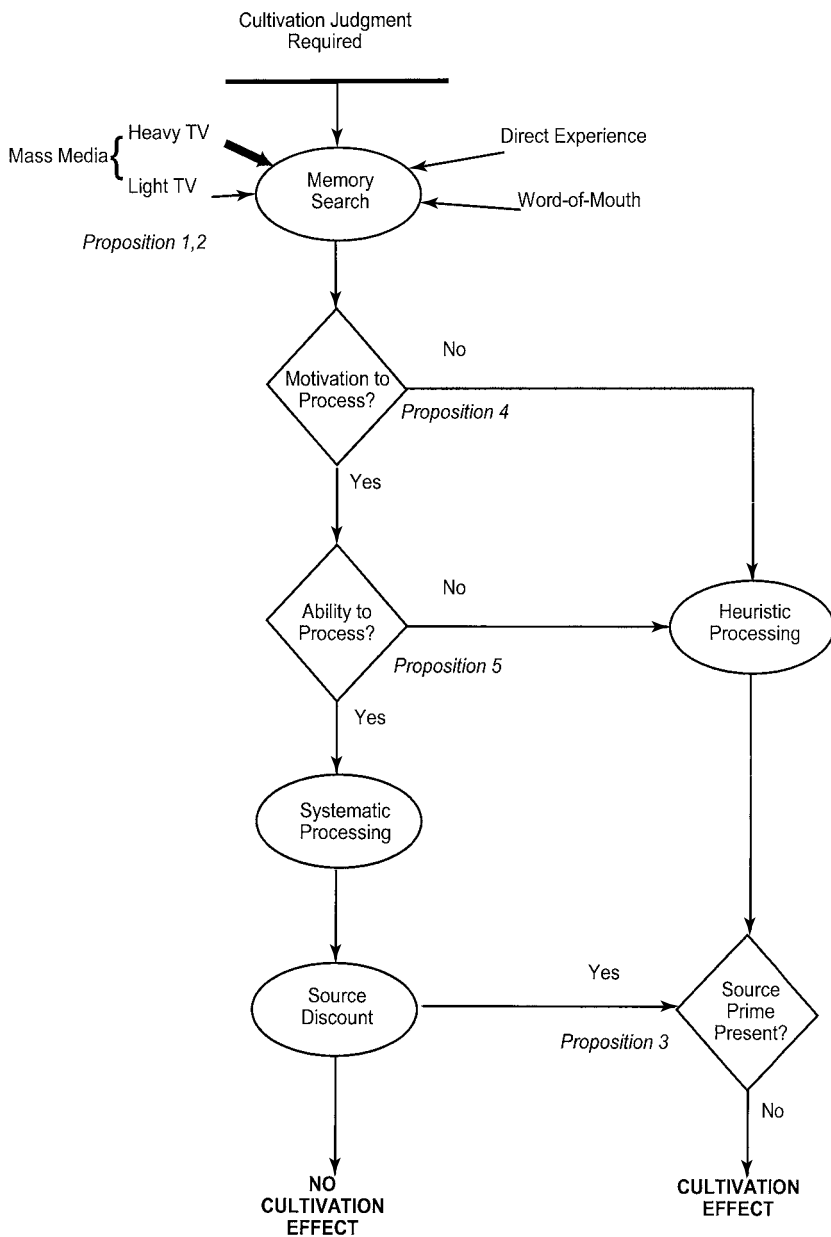


FIG. 10.1 Flow diagram of the heuristic processing model of cultivation effects. Circles represent mental processes. The thicker arrow from Heavy TV to Memory Search indicates a greater contribution to the search process. From *Media Effects: Advances in Theory and Research* (2nd ed., p. 87), by J. Bryant & D. Zillmann (Eds.), Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. Reprinted with permission.

be objectively compared with the same aspects of the real world. Examples include asking respondents to estimate the percentage of Americans who are involved in a violent crime; the percentage of the American workforce that consists of lawyers, doctors, or police officers; the percentage of marriages that end in divorce; and so forth. *Value-system* or *second-order measures* pertain to the values, attitudes, and beliefs that might be cultivated from television content. Examples include asking respondents if they are afraid to walk alone at night, measuring their level of mistrust, their acceptance of violence, their belief that their spouse would be unfaithful, or their level of materialism.

What makes this distinction interesting is that, according to Hawkins and Pingree's (1982) review of the literature up to that point, the size and reliability of the cultivation effect tends to vary as a function of the type of judgments. The cultivation effect tends to be observed more strongly and more often for first-order (demographic) than for second-order (value-system) beliefs. There are at least two nonmutually exclusive explanations for this pattern of findings. One explanation is that only one type of judgment—judgments related to the prevalence of particular constructs that occur often on television—is influenced by television viewing. Judgments related to values and attitudes that might be developed from the lessons of television, however, are simply not affected by amount of viewing. A second explanation is that the judgments differ in terms of the processes involved in constructing them. This possibility implies at least two important things: Television may influence each of the two types of judgments in different ways, and different factors may mediate or moderate the relation between television viewing and the two types of judgments.

Cultivation Judgments As Psychological Judgments. If one scrutinizes the types of judgments that have been classified as first- or second-order judgments in terms of how psychologists categorize them, it is apparent that they differ in fundamental ways. First-order judgments for the most part consist of judgments of probability or set size (Shrum, 1995). Examples include estimating risk (e.g., risk of crime) and estimating the number or percentage of instances in which a particular category (e.g., millionaire) occurs within a larger, superordinate category (e.g., Americans). Second-order judgments typically consist of attitude, value, or belief judgments. Examples include beliefs related to trust, the extent to which the world is a mean and violent place, and whether achievement is reflected in product ownership, just to name a few. Viewed this way, it is quite possible that first- and second-order judgments differ in terms of the way in which they are constructed. Moreover, decades of research in social and cognitive psychology have detailed the processes involved in constructing these judgments, which is useful in determining the role that certain types of inputs (e.g., television information) may play in this process.

A Process Model of First-Order Cultivation Judgments

How Are the Judgments Constructed? In attempting to construct a process model for cultivation effects, it seemed reasonable to start with first-order (set-size and probability) judgments, given that those are the types of judgments for which cultivation effects have tended to be more robust and consistent. So how are those types of judgments constructed? Research by Tversky and Kahneman (1973; see also Kahneman & Tversky, 1982) suggests that these types of judgments are often made through the application of particular heuristics, or rules of thumb. Specifically, judgments of set size and probability tend to be based on the application of the availability heuristic (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973) or the simulation heuristic (Kahneman & Tversky, 1982). In using the *availability heuristic*, people base their judgments of set size or probability on how easy a relevant example comes to mind: The easier it is to recall, the higher the estimate. Thus, people tend to estimate that words in the English language that start with the letter *K* occur more often than words that have *K* as the third letter (Tversky & Kahneman, 1973, Study 3), even though the opposite is in fact the case. This result is presumably because words tend to be organized in memory according to their first letter, and thus words that start with *K* are more easily recalled. Similarly, 80% of people tend to estimate that accidents account for more deaths than do strokes, even though strokes account for about 85% more deaths than do accidents (Lichtenstein, Slovic, Fischhoff, Layman, & Combs, 1978). Again, this is presumably because accidents are easier to recall or imagine than strokes.

When judging set size or probability, a relevant example may not be available in memory (i.e., present in memory) or, if available, not particularly accessible (i.e., not easily retrieved). Thus, the availability heuristic cannot be applied. In these instances, people may resort to basing their estimates on the ease with which a relevant example can be imagined. This is an example of the *simulation heuristic*. Supporting this notion, research has shown that when people are induced to imagine a particular event such as winning a contest (Gregory, Cialdini, & Carpenter, 1982) or contracting a disease (Sherman, Cialdini, Schwartzman, & Reynolds, 1985), they provide higher estimates of the probability that they will experience these events compared with people who are not induced to imagine such events, and these relations are mediated by ease of imagining (Sherman et al., 1985).

Relation to Media Consumption. The studies just noted, along with numerous others, clearly document that accessibility of relevant examples or ease of construction of a scenario influences estimates of set size and probability. Those with more accessible examples or greater ease of construction provide higher estimates. This has been shown to occur in both experimental studies and field studies. But what influences this accessibility? Clearly, in the experimental studies, accessibility is manipulated. But what of the field studies of Lichtenstein et al. (1978)? Why did people tend to greatly overestimate the number of deaths caused by accidents but greatly underestimate deaths caused by strokes? Lichtenstein et al. speculated

that accessibility is influenced by media coverage, suggesting that media publicity of such dramatic events as accidents and homicides increases accessibility of these examples relative to less dramatic and publicized causes of death such as strokes. This speculation was supported by a content analysis of newspaper articles showing just such differences in coverage (Combs & Slovic, 1979).

These studies suggest that media consumption may influence the accessibility of constructs that are commonly portrayed. It follows, then, that differences in media consumption (all other things being equal) may influence levels of accessibility of relevant constructs. If so, then for judgments of set size and probability, if the availability or simulation heuristic is used, then heavier media consumers should provide higher estimates of set size or probability than lighter media consumers. In fact, this is exactly what cultivation theory predicts.

Constructing the Process Model. From this point, it is a fairly simple leap to the development and testing of a process model of cultivation. Such a model predicts that heavier television viewing will make relevant examples more accessible in memory than lighter viewing (Proposition 1) and that this enhanced accessibility will result in higher estimates, indicating a mediating role of accessibility (Proposition 2). Note, however, that the notion that television examples would be used in the construction of these judgments is not necessarily intuitive. When estimating the prevalence of lawyers or police officers in the workforce, it is unlikely that people would consciously use an example of a TV lawyer or police officer to construct this judgment. Thus, if such TV examples are indeed used in constructing real-world judgments, then people are likely unaware of the source of these examples (because they are made fairly quickly) and thus do not discount the television examples as an invalid source (Proposition 3). Finally, conditions that facilitate or inhibit the use of judgmental heuristics such as availability and simulation should correspondingly increase or decrease the cultivation effect. These conditions include motivation to process information, which should inhibit the cultivation effect (Proposition 4) and lack of ability to process information, which should facilitate the cultivation effect (Proposition 5). Approximately a dozen studies have validated and replicated each of these key propositions (for a review, see Shrum, 2002).

Addressing Second-Order Cultivation Judgments

As noted elsewhere (Shrum, 1995, 2002), the psychological process model shown in Figure 10.1 is mute with respect to second-order judgments such as attitudes and values. This is unfortunate because, as Gerbner et al. (2002) have noted, it is the extrapolation or symbolic transformation of the television message into more general perspectives and ideologies that is perhaps more interesting and better captures the concept of cultivation theory than a focus on simple perceptions and beliefs that are captured by first-order measures. For this reason, it seems useful

to extend the process model to include second-order judgments such as attitudes and values.

In developing the model for first-order judgments, we first started with the question of how such judgments are made, working backward to understand how television information might influence these judgments. In applying this approach to second-order judgments, it quickly becomes apparent that first- and second-order judgments are made quite differently. For one, judgments of set size and probability are virtually always memory based (Hastie & Park, 1986). That is, when asked to form a judgment about the probability of being involved in a violent crime or the incidence of millionaires in the United States, people would not be likely to have such answers stored in memory. Rather, they would construct them by recalling relevant examples or scenarios. Thus, first-order judgments are likely constructed at the time the judgment is required (e.g., responding to a research query; playing Trivial Pursuit). For this reason, we would expect that memory for these examples would correlate with both the independent (TV viewing) and dependent (judgments) variables (Hastie & Park, 1986). In fact, that is what the studies have consistently shown (Busselle & Shrum, *in press*; Shrum, 1996). This process also implies that conditions operating at the time of judgment would be more likely to impact the TV-judgment relation than would conditions operating at the time of encoding or viewing. Consistent with this notion, judgment conditions such as time pressure (Shrum, 1999a), task involvement (Shrum, 2001), and source discounting (Shrum et al., 1998) have been shown to moderate the cultivation effect. Conversely, conditions or variables operating at the time of viewing (e.g., attention while viewing, intention to view, perceived reality of television, need for cognition) have been shown to have virtually no effect on either the magnitude of first-order judgments or memory for TV information (Busselle & Shrum, *in press*; O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997; Shrum, 1996, 2001; Shrum et al., 1998).

In contrast, the construction of values, attitudes, and beliefs is likely made in a different manner. It is of course possible that attitudes and beliefs could be constructed in a memory-based fashion. When asked to provide an attitude toward a particular object, people may attempt to recall relevant information (both cognitions and affect) and then construct their attitude in real time. This would likely occur when people do not have a readily accessible attitude or belief to provide when a request for attitude expression is made. If they did have an attitude or belief readily accessible, they would instead simply retrieve their prior constructed attitude or belief and report it (Hastie & Park, 1986; see also Carlston, 1980; Lichtenstein & Srull, 1985, 1987; Lingle & Ostrom, 1979).

But consider the types of attitudes and beliefs that are typically measured in cultivation research. These measures assess the extent to which people believe the world is a violent place, are afraid to walk alone at night, approve of violence by police, believe crime is the most important political issue, do not trust others, and so forth. These types of beliefs are commonly used in everyday life. Thus, they are likely to already exist for most people, having been formed long ago

and reinforced or updated on a consistent basis. This is even more so the case for constructs such as personal values. By definition, values are stable and enduring beliefs that everyone possesses and that serve as guides to behavior over the course of a lifetime (Rokeach, 1973). Thus, they are formed at a relatively early age and then changed (either made stronger or altered) as new information comes in. This process of constructing judgments on the basis of incoming information (as opposed to retrieved information) is what Hastie and Park (1986) term an online judgment.

If it is true that these types of judgments are formed in an online fashion, important implications are made for the role that television viewing might play in the formation of those judgments. In particular, it suggests that these types of judgments are likely made (developed, reinforced, or altered) during the viewing process. If so, it also implies that conditions operating during viewing may affect the influence of television information rather than conditions operating at the time the judgment is required by some external situation (e.g., being asked by a researcher). Note that this is essentially the opposite of the process involved with first-order (memory-based) cultivation judgments, which depend on recall at the time the judgment is required and thus should be affected by conditions present at that time rather than at the time of viewing.

Supportive Evidence. The notion that second-order cultivation judgments might be influenced by conditions at the time of viewing is a proposition that was addressed in a recent study (Burroughs et al., 2002). In that study, we investigated the relation between television viewing and the consumer value of materialism. Materialism is commonly viewed as the value placed on the acquisition of material objects, such as expensive cars, homes, and clothes (Richins & Dawson, 1992). Because content analyses have consistently shown that the world portrayed on television tends to be more affluent and materialistic than the real world (Hirschman, 1988; Lichter et al., 1994; O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997), we expected that, consistent with cultivation theory, these materialistic messages would be internalized by viewers, resulting in higher levels of materialism for those who viewed relatively more television in general. However, we expected this positive relation between television viewing and materialism to be moderated by certain factors that might affect the processing of the message during viewing. These factors included the degree to which viewers tend to be attentive while viewing and the extent to which viewers tend to elaborate on the television message while viewing. We expected that those who pay more attention while viewing would be more persuaded by the television message than those who pay less attention, and we also expected that those who elaborate more on the message (those higher in need for cognition; Cacioppo & Petty, 1982) would also be more affected than those who elaborate less.

The results were as expected. We found that level of television viewing was related to materialism: The more people viewed television, the more materialistic they were. However, also as expected, this relation was moderated by the two

process variables. Specifically, the positive relation between television viewing and materialism was stronger for those who paid more attention to the program while viewing than for those who paid less attention and stronger for those higher in need for cognition than for those lower in need for cognition.

Implications for Model Development and Causality

The moderating role of attention while viewing and need for cognition is consistent with our theorizing that the process of cultivation for second-order cultivation judgments tends to occur during viewing. The variables of attention and need for cognition were intended to capture processes that were taking place during the viewing process. As such, it is highly unlikely that such variables would moderate the cultivation effect if in fact the judgments were memory based, at least in the pattern we observed. This last phrase is an important qualifier. It is possible that greater elaboration and greater attention could indeed have an effect on the extent to which television information is used in a memory-based judgment. However, as has been shown in previous studies (Shrum, 2001; Shrum et al., 1998) the effect should be just the opposite of the one we observed: Greater attention and elaboration should lead to more source discounting (discounting the television information because it is not veridical) and thus reduce rather than inflate the cultivation effect.

The pattern of results we observed also has important implications for causality. As we noted earlier, correlational results are always open to alternative explanations of causal paths. However, the pattern of moderating effects that we observed are difficult to explain in reverse causality or third-variable terms. In particular, attention and elaboration are process variables that necessarily occur during rather than prior to viewing, making a reverse causality explanation untenable. And, although it is still possible that some third variable is driving the TV-materialism relation, that variable would also have to account for the two moderating effects we observed. Given that constraint, it is unclear what that third variable might be.

Limitations of the Study

There is one important limitation to the results of Burroughs et al. (2002). That limitation pertains to the use of need for cognition as a surrogate measure of elaboration during viewing. It could certainly be argued that those higher in need for cognition would not enjoy such a cognitively easy task as television viewing. Moreover, if they did view, they might be more prone to counterarguing than support arguing. In fact, Burroughs et al. found that need for cognition was indeed negatively correlated with television viewing. However, we would argue that for those who are high in need for cognition who do decide to view frequently, a continual counterarguing of the television message would be a particularly miserable experience. Rather, we expect that those high in need for cognition who view frequently are the ones who enjoy watching television and thus would be more

likely to suspend disbelief and elaborate extensively than those high in need for cognition who are lighter viewers. Our pattern of results is consistent with that notion: It is the people who are both heavy viewers and high in need for cognition that exhibit the highest levels of materialism.

CONCLUSION

The arguments that we have presented in this chapter for the processes involved in the construction of second-order cultivation judgments are just that—arguments. Although we have discussed some empirical findings that support our reasoning, there is still quite a bit of work to do in terms of fleshing out the entire process. Ideally, one would end up with a process model for second-order judgments that is similar to the one shown in Figure 10.1 for first-order judgments, one that specifies testable propositions that address the processes that mediate and moderate the effect of television viewing on judgments. Doing so would provide a major step in establishing the causal impact that television viewing has on the gamut of human judgment and behavior.

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Paths From Television Violence to Aggression: Reinterpreting the Evidence

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Entertainment provides at least three gratifications: a respite from the anxieties and pressures of everyday life; the opportunity to compare oneself with the demeanor, possessions, and behavior of others; and a means of keeping up with what is transpiring in the world. These gratifications have been particularly well documented in the case of television (Comstock & Scharrer, 1999), where a variety of measures of stress and interpersonal conflict predict greater affinity for or consumption of television; where viewers tend to watch those on the screen like themselves in gender, age, or ethnicity more attentively (which would make comparisons more meaningful); and where there is a common belief that something can be learned from all types of programming and keeping abreast embraces both events in the world at large and the varied portrayals and depictions offered by the medium in news, sports, and entertainment programming. There are also less-positive consequences of attending to entertainment, with one of the most investigated by the social and behavioral sciences the facilitation of aggressive and antisocial behavior by violent television and film portrayals.

The empirical evidence on the influence of violent television entertainment on aggression, bolstered by an extraordinary seven meta-analyses with varying emphases, often has been interpreted as supporting the view that attitudes serve as the link between exposure to violent programs and behavior. The evidence, in

fact, gives equal support to the hypothesis that the link is the availability of genres of behavior in the minds of viewers—that is, the readiness by which they may be retrieved—rather than dispositions toward behavior.

From this latter perspective, television violence is processed by young viewers in a manner similar to advertising within the elaboration likelihood model (ELM; Cacioppo & Petty, 1985; Petty & Cacioppo, 1990). The factors that seemingly promote favorable evaluations of aggressive behavior instead govern the salience of such behavior. Violent portrayals operate like television commercials, which most of the time, because they are low in persuasive argumentation, affect consumers by maintaining the salience of particular brands among purchase options (Comstock & Scharrer, 1999).

The research on television violence and aggressive and antisocial behavior has been voluminous but has been generally assigned to a sphere of scientific endeavor quite distinct from consumer psychology. This is more a product of myopia and an inclination to honor the apparent boundaries of paradigms than it is one of distinctiveness among theories or any interest in decidedly different types of outcomes. In fact, it is a quick and comfortable journey that leads face-to-face with consumer psychology if one travels the backward loop from Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory to the health belief model (Becker, 1974). The health belief model was derived from social learning theory, an earlier version of what Bandura now calls social cognitive theory. The health belief model essentially argues that behavior related to health—such as food preferences, cigarette and alcohol consumption, seat belt use, and cancer examinations—can be changed by manipulating beliefs about personal risk, the availability of effective means of risk reduction, and the ease of access to and social acceptability of these means of risk reduction. It has been the conceptual model for such large-scale federally financed interventions as the Stanford cardiovascular field experiments (Farquar et al., 1977, 1990), in which persuasive campaigns, using the mass media and counseling by physicians, were employed to encourage individuals to behave in ways that would reduce the risk of cardiovascular mishap. Social cognitive theory, of course, is the underpinning for much of the experimental research on young children's increased aggressiveness as a consequence of exposure to violent portrayals (e.g., Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963a, 1963b). The health belief model makes it clear that social cognition is a theory of persuasion, although one that emphasizes behavior, modeling of that behavior by attractive persons, relevance achieved through attributes of the portrayal that encourage identification, and, in its application to the area of television violence and aggression, persuasion that is unintended. Thus, the connection between consumer psychology and television violence is not limited to the frequent consumption of media content that is a vehicle for commercials but extends to the fundamentals of theory, specifically, in the present case, the analogy provided by the peripheral or heuristic path of dual-processing theories such as the ELM.

THE MOST USEFUL GATEWAY

At this point in time, the most useful gateway to the evidence on television violence and aggressive and antisocial behavior is through meta-analyses (Comstock & Scharrer, 2003). Meta-analysis estimates the magnitude of the relationships among variables. These estimates are more reliable and more valid than those produced by a single study (Hunt, 1997). It thereby enhances the quality and veracity of evidence.

The role of meta-analysis, and its appeal, is aptly conveyed by the title of Morton Hunt's (1997) account of its development and uses, *How Science Takes Stock*. It has become an important tool for drawing inferences when several and often many empirical studies exist on the same topic. The essence of meta-analysis is the estimating of the size of the relationship between two variables. Typically, there is an exhaustive search for unpublished as well as published studies. This is directed at the file drawer problem—published studies alone may result in an overestimate of the magnitude of a relationship because studies showing larger, statistically significant outcomes are more likely to be published (Rosenthal, 1979). In turn, studies can be scored on various dimensions for quality and for ecological validity (conditions that parallel everyday life) so that the analysis eventually can focus on the studies that have the strongest claims for generalizing beyond their particular sets of data. In meta-analysis jargon, the goal is to estimate the *effect size*—the magnitude of the association between two variables. Despite this language, there is nothing about meta-analysis that ensures that the independent variable contributes to or in any way is causally related to the dependent variable. This is an inference that is left to the analyst. The benefits of meta-analysis are the use of all retrievable data to estimate the magnitude of a relationship, the greater reliability and validity that result from the enlarged *N*, and the ability to code studies for any and every conceivable attribute so that the analyst can focus on those with particular characteristics or qualities. For example, in the case of violent television portrayals and aggressive or antisocial behavior, the analyst could isolate those experiments where a portrayal of justified aggression was the treatment and compare the effect size for the dependent variable with effect sizes for other treatments. The estimate based on several experiments would have greater reliability and validity than the estimate from the original 1963 experiment by Berkowitz and Rawlings (i.e., if the additional experiments were equivalent as a group in quality and ecological validity to the original). In effect, studies are treated analogously to respondents in a survey. The quality and validity of interpretation depends on the representativeness of the sample (in the case of meta-analysis, a census) and the selection of questions addressed to the sample (in the case of meta-analysis, the studies). The basic calculation is as follows:

$$\text{Effect Size} = \frac{\text{Mean}_t - \text{Mean}_c}{ESD}$$

Where t = treatment, c = control, and ESD = estimate of the standard deviation. Because the standard deviation represents the same proportion of cases for all normal distributions, this produces an effect size that can be pooled with others for an aggregate estimate. The formula obviously fits only experimental designs, but procedures have been developed to estimate the equivalent for surveys and other designs. In addition, procedures also have been developed to estimate the statistical significance of any effect size and fail-safe numbers—the number of additional outcomes with null results that would be necessary to reduce the obtained estimate to null. Thus, meta-analysis in its current form makes it possible for the confidence of the analyst to rest not only on the magnitude of the effect size but also on the estimated probability that an outcome is attributable to sampling variability and the estimated quantity of null results that would have to be uncovered to overturn an observed effect size.

Nevertheless, meta-analysis is not a substitute for interpretation. The fretful analyst still must decide whether the outcomes of experiments are generalizable to everyday circumstances and whether positive correlations between two variables in survey data represent the operation of a third variable or causation, as well as the direction of causation.

In the case of television and film violence and aggressive and antisocial behavior, interpretation is confronted with a large array of data—seven quantitative aggregations of study outcomes. The most comprehensive (Paik & Comstock, 1994) presents almost 1,150 instances in which an effect size was calculated. Furthermore, the outcomes of individual studies sometimes may supply information that clearly adds to, extends, and qualitatively enriches rather than is merely represented in a meta-analysis. As a result, meta-analysis should not be thought of as a means by which all scientific questions are answered but as a source of particularly reliable and valid estimates of the relationships among variables that may be importantly augmented or qualified by the outcomes of particular studies.

In the present instance, the meta-analytic data lead to a number of conclusions unambiguously thoroughly supported by empirical evidence. In addition, the examination of the outcomes of a particularly compelling study leads to a surprise that suggests a revision in theory.

Andison (1977), in a pioneering effort, simply categorized the outcomes of 67 experiments and surveys as to the direction and size of the relationship between violence viewing and aggressive or antisocial behavior. Hearold (1986) was the first to apply the now widely accepted meta-analytic paradigm in which the standard deviation is the criterion for assessing the magnitude of the relationship between variables to the literature on media and behavior. A student of Eugene Glass at the University of Colorado (who is credited with developing meta-analysis in the 1970s in an attempt to quantitatively discredit H. J. Eysenck's claims that psychotherapy was ineffective) examined more than 1,000 relationships (drawn from 168 separate studies) between exposure to anti- and prosocial portrayals and anti- and

prosocial behavior.¹ Wood, Wong, and Cachere (1991) examined 23 experiments in and out of the laboratory in which the dependent variable was “unconstrained interpersonal aggression” among children and teenagers. Allen, D’Alessio, and Brezgel (1995) aggregated the data from 33 laboratory-type experiments in which the independent variable was exposure to sexually explicit video or film portrayals and the dependent variable was aggression. Hogben (1998) confined himself to 56 coefficients drawn from studies measuring everyday viewing but included a wide array of aggression-related responses, including, in addition to aggressive or antisocial behavior, hostile attitudes, personality variables, and, in one case (Cairns, Hunter, & Herring, 1980), the content of invented news stories. Bushman and Anderson (2001) tracked the correlation between exposure to violent television or film portrayals in experimental and nonexperimental designs in 5-year intervals over a 25-year period. Paik and Comstock (1994), in a comprehensive updating of Hearold’s assessment of the relationship between exposure to television violence and aggressive and antisocial behavior, included 82 new studies for a total of 217 that produced 1,142 coefficients between the independent and dependent variables.²

These data represent the behavior of many thousands of persons ranging in age from preschool to adulthood, an assortment of independent and dependent variables, and a variety of research methods. For example, Paik and Comstock (1994) included the full range of ages, a variety of types of programming and nine categories of behavior, and laboratory-type experiments, field experiments, time series, and surveys. These are all typically positive features of meta-analyses, which, as surveys of a literature, take on the characteristics of the area of inquiry in contrast to the more limited (and limiting) attributes of a single study.

¹The meta-analytic paradigm made its first public appearance in the 1976 presidential address by Glass (1976) at the annual meeting of the American Educational Research Association in San Francisco. This justifiably places him foremost among the pioneers of the method. However, at about the same time Robert Rosenthal at Harvard was at work on a similar scheme (Rosenthal & Rubin, 1978). Neither knew of what the other was doing (Hunt, 1997), an example of the frequent independence of innovations from the ventures of specific innovators.

²Paik and Comstock (1994) focused on the most substantial portion of the Hearold (1986) meta-analysis. Hearold examined all possible combinations of antisocial and prosocial portrayals and behavior, including the effect size between exposure to prosocial portrayals and antisocial behavior and the effect size between exposure to antisocial portrayals and prosocial behavior (although the data on these pairings expectedly was not voluminous). However, she did not include erotica or pornographic portrayals among the independent variables, and she included among her antisocial dependent variables such outcomes as stereotyping, passivity, and feelings of powerlessness. Aggressive portrayals and behavior nevertheless made up the largest number of independent and dependent variables. Paik and Comstock confined themselves to aggressive portrayals and outcomes, except for including erotica and pornographic portrayals among their independent variables. Thus, they updated the major portion of Hearold’s analysis and extended it in terms of coverage by including erotica and pornographic portrayals and in terms of method by including estimates of statistical significance and fail-safe numbers.

These analyses irrefutably confirm that there is a positive correlation between exposure to violent television and movie portrayals and engagement in aggressive or antisocial behavior. This holds for the data from experiments and for the data from surveys. All seven of the quantitative aggregations of data can be invoked on behalf of this outcome including the four not confined to a narrow focus on particular measures of exposure or quite specific outcomes (such as unconstrained interpersonal aggression)—the initial pioneering effort by Andison (1977), Hearold (1986), Bushman and Anderson (2001), and Paik and Comstock (1994). However, interpretation quickly strides to center stage because this datum is not very informative about the processes responsible for the relationship. Experiments unambiguously document causation within their circumstances, but it is a matter of judgment whether their outcomes can be generalized to other circumstances, and positive correlation coefficients within surveys document association in everyday life but by themselves are insufficient to infer causation (Cook & Campbell, 1979).

INTERPRETING THE EVIDENCE

The case for causation is quite strong. It rests on two factors readily observable in the meta-analyses. The first is the consistency of the outcomes for the experimental designs, where the positive effect sizes are quite robust ($r = .40$ in Paik & Comstock 1994), statistical significance is readily achieved (p exceeds four digits in Paik & Comstock), and fail-safe numbers are huge (over 700,000 in Paik & Comstock). The second is the confirmation by the survey designs—where the effect sizes are more modest but respectable ($r = .19$ in Paik & Comstock), while statistical significance and fail-safe numbers (the quantity of null findings necessary to reduce a coefficient to statistical insignificance) remain impressive—that the condition necessary to infer causation in everyday life exists. This condition is quite explicit: a positive correlation between everyday violence viewing and everyday aggressive or antisocial behavior (i.e., a correlation outside the laboratory) that stoutly resists explanation other than by some causal contribution of viewing to behavior. The meta-analyses supply the correlation. Other studies supply the additional evidence. Thus, the experiments begin with evidence of causation, and the surveys confirm that this outcome is generalizable to everyday life.

The reverse hypothesis (Belson, 1978), though superficially promising, is particularly disappointing. This is the proposition that the positive correlation is explained by the seeking out of violent entertainment by those prone to aggressiveness. Admittedly, there are some sets of data in which aggressiveness predicts subsequent violence viewing, although the literature is quite mixed as to the regularity or pervasiveness of such an outcome (Comstock & Scharrer, 1999). In fact, the analysis that supplies some of the strongest evidence against the reverse hypothesis also provides some data consistent with it. The difficulty is that the reverse hypothesis fails woefully as a complete explanation for the correlation.

The most convincing evidence comes from the reanalysis by Kang (1990) of the NBC panel data on elementary school children (Milavsky, Kessler, Stipp, & Rubens, 1982).³ This repeated measures surveying of the same sample over a 3.5-year period permitted the calculation of coefficients representing earlier viewing and later behavior or earlier behavior and later viewing, permitting inferences about which was affecting the other. Kang found eight statistically significant coefficients for a viewing-to-behavior effect but only four for a behavior-to-viewing effect, out of a total of 15 pairings of earlier and later measurement. Moreover, there was only one instance of reciprocal association (viewing predicted behavior and behavior predicted viewing within the same span of time). These data are wholly inconsistent with the reverse hypothesis as a comprehensive explanation. The behavior variable in the NBC data was interpersonal aggression—hitting, fighting, stealing, name calling. Belson (1978) in his survey of about 1,600 London teenage males extends the dismissal of the reverse hypothesis to seriously harmful behavior. He statistically manipulated his data so that he could compare directly the plausibility of the direct and the reverse hypothesis. He concluded that there was no support for the reverse hypothesis and strong support for the direct hypothesis that violence viewing increased the committing of seriously harmful acts (such as attempted rape, false report of a bomb threat, and use of a tire iron, razor, knife, or gun in a fight) among a subsample with a high propensity for delinquent behavior (p. 390, Table 12.13).

The impression given by Bandura and colleagues (Bandura et al., 1963a, 1963b), and often repeated in textbooks, after early experiments with nursery school children is that males are more likely to be affected. Meta-analysis demurs. Girls as well as boys appear to be affected. In Paik and Comstock (1994), effect sizes are similar for boys and girls in the data from the method that represents everyday events—surveys. Only in experiments are effect sizes clearly greater for males. Whether this false impression is attributable to entertainment history (aggressive females on the screen are now more frequent), social change (childrearing is probably now somewhat more accepting in regard to the expression of aggression by girls), norms (the Stanford nursery school surely was a campground of gender role convention), or the preponderance of males as subjects in the experiments (they outnumber females by about 6 to 1) is a matter of speculation. What is not is that meta-analysis has supplied a corrective. Meta-analysis also leads to the conclusion that effects do not diminish with age, although they are largest among the very young. In Paik and Comstock, effect sizes displayed an upward shift among those

³The NBC panel study involved the collection of data from elementary and high school samples over a 3.5-year period in two cities, one in the Midwest and one in the Southwest. There were six points of data collection, which led to 15 wave pairs of earlier and later measurement (I-II, I-III, I-IV, etc.). The focus was on earlier television violence exposure and later aggressive behavior. The lag time between measurements varied from 3 months to more than 3 years. The elementary school *N* for the shortest period was 497 and for the longest period, 112, with attrition reducing the *N* as the time lags became longer.

of college age, although otherwise there was a modest decline from preschool to adulthood with increasing age. Thus, it is not justified to conclude that the effects of television violence on aggressive and antisocial behavior are limited to the very young, or that they decline as cognitive ability increases to understand what is transpiring on the screen, to separate fantasy from reality, and to make distinctions between stirring acts and devious motives. Again, this is a pattern that becomes more readily recognizable in meta-analyses because single studies typically are quite restrictive in the range of ages included.

The experiments that began to accumulate in 1963 with the work of Bandura, Berkowitz, and their colleagues (Bandura et al., 1963a, 1963b; Berkowitz & Rawlings, 1963) drew attention to the possibility that exposure to violent portrayals increased aggressive and antisocial behavior. However, they also were rather starkly limited to immediate effects. Surveys began to address the possibility of effects over time by attempting to represent earlier viewing in the measure of exposure (McLeod, Atkin, & Chaffee, 1972a, 1972b), and Eron and Lefkowitz and colleagues (Lefkowitz, Eron, Walder, & Huesmann, 1972, 1977) reported a statistically significant correlation between violence viewing at about age 8 years and aggressive behavior a decade later after controlling for aggression in the earlier time period (and, thus, its correlates, including any otherwise unmeasured causes of the behavior) as part of the 1972 U. S. Surgeon General's inquiry into television violence. This was the beginning of the production of data sets that seemingly show an effect over time. The most recent is from Johnson and colleagues (Johnson, Cohen, Smailes, Kasen, & Brook, 2002), who report statistically significant correlations between television viewing at age 14 years and aggressive and antisocial behavior at ages 16 and 22 years with the reverse hypothesis encountering the usual inhospitality among the data with the pattern about the same for those both high and low initially in aggressive and antisocial behavior. However, the clearest documentation of effects over time occurs in the NBC panel data, where it is possible to distinguish between longitudinal effects and cumulative effects.

NBC's original analysis by Milavsky et al. (1982), found that there were two instances in which effects increased with the passage of time. In one case, the coefficients among the elementary school sample became larger as the number of months between measurements increased, with the largest clustered among the five coefficients representing the longest time spans. In the other, the coefficients among the same elementary school sample became somewhat larger when there were no statistical controls for the influence of earlier viewing, implying that there was an aggregative influence of violence viewing. Two reanalyses of the NBC panel data provide further evidence of effects over time. Cook, Kendzierski, and Thomas (1983) concluded that there was evidence of increasing coefficients with the passage of time among both the elementary school sample and the teenage sample and for several different measures of aggressive and antisocial behavior. Kang (1990) found that five of his statistically significant eight viewing-to-behavior coefficients were clustered among the longest time spans, whereas three of his four

behavior-to-viewing coefficients were clustered among the shortest time spans. These analyses suggest that there are longitudinal effects and cumulative effects. The former probably represents the influence of earlier viewing on behavior that has become newly relevant or newly within the range of the individual. The latter indicates that influence accumulates. Thus, the data supports the developmental interpretation (Eron & Huesmann, 1987) that earlier viewing establishes traits that will persist and perhaps become even more pronounced while confining the reverse hypothesis largely to the short term.

Milavsky and colleagues (Milavsky et al., 1982) seized on socioeconomic status as a possible explanation for positive coefficients in their panel data. They argued that the substantial representation of young people from households of low socioeconomic status (SES) led to samples where television viewing—and thus exposure to violent portrayals—and aggressive behavior would be correlated. Alas, SES proves inadequate to producing the required artifact. Socioeconomic status consistently has been judged as unable to fully explain positive associations between violence viewing and aggressive and antisocial behavior (Belson, 1978; Chaffee, 1972; Comstock & Scharrer, 1999). Furthermore, in the case of the NBC data, Cook et al. (1983) teased out a truly embarrassing rejoinder—the pattern that held for the males of increasing coefficients as time spans increased, alleged by Milavsky and colleagues as an artifact of socioeconomic status, was duplicated with middle-class girls.

The recorded effects are not trivial in seriousness or size. The effect sizes in Paik and Comstock (1994) for interpersonal aggression, the category of behavior for which the evidence is the strongest because it has been examined more often than any other type of antisocial behavior, are in the medium range by Cohen's (1988) frequently employed criteria (Rosenthal, Rosnow, & Rubin, 2000). Interpersonal aggression includes hitting, fighting, name calling, and stealing and ordinarily would constitute an experience that most victims would prefer to avoid. Other seriously harmful or criminal outcomes have much smaller effect sizes, but they are statistically significant and represent the infliction of greater harm than merely hitting, fighting, name calling, or stealing. The Belson data (Belson, 1978) provide a particularly striking example of a nontrivial outcome. He found in his London sample of teenage males that the viewing of violent television entertainment predicted the committing of significantly more seriously hurtful (and decidedly criminal) acts than were committed by those like them in every other measured respect (other than the greater viewing of violence), and there was no evidence that this could be attributed to the reverse hypothesis. Similarly, Johnson and colleagues (2002) found that greater television viewing (which would imply greater exposure to violent portrayals) at an earlier age predicted more frequent assaults or physical fights resulting in injury among 16- and 22-year-old males with the plausibility of the reverse hypothesis diminished (as pointed out earlier) by the occurrence of the same pattern for those scoring lower as well as higher in aggressiveness at the earlier time period.

Taking advantage of the Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) television station license freeze in the late 1940s and early 1950s to conduct a quasi-experimental time series with switching replications (Cook & Campbell, 1979), a group led by the methodologist Thomas Cook (Hennigan et al., 1982) found consistent evidence across two different samples (cities and states) and at two points in time (early and late introduction of television) that television's introduction was followed by a significant rise in larceny theft. This is an outcome that has enjoyed two distinct interpretations: that it should be attributed to relative deprivation accelerated by the materialistic emphases of the medium (Hennigan et al., 1982) and that it represents emulation of television's antisocial emphases in a manner that apprehension would be unlikely and sanctions modest (Comstock, 1991).

In the Paik and Comstock (1994) meta-analysis, coefficients were mostly in the medium range (by Cohen's criteria) for simulated aggressive behavior (such as aggressive inclination measured by questionnaire or performance on an aggression machine) and minor aggression (such as violence done to an object or physical aggression against a person that would fall under the law's radar), although sometimes they were in the large range.⁴ They were smaller when illegal activities were the dependent variable and became progressively smaller as the seriousness of the offense increased. Even so, criminal violence against a person achieved statistical significance and scored a fail-safe number just shy of 3,000. The issue of the possible triviality of the effect sizes for television violence viewing and aggressive and antisocial behavior is addressed somewhat differently by Bushman and Anderson (2001). They compiled a selection to compare with the effect size for all observations in the Paik and Comstock (1994) meta-analysis (p. 481, Figure 2). The $r = .31$ for media violence and aggression compares favorably in terms of magnitude with those for such pairings as passive smoking and lung cancer, calcium intake and bone mass, and homework and academic achievement. In their own cumulative meta-analysis, Bushman and Anderson found stable, statistically significant correlations for experimental designs from 1975 to 2000, and for the ecologically most valid data, the nonexperimental designs representing real-life aggression or antisocial behavior, Bushman and Anderson found statistically significant correlations that have increased in magnitude over the past 25 years. In contrast, in a parallel content analysis of major news media, they uncovered a decline in the frequency

⁴Paik and Comstock (1994) divided outcomes into three categories: simulated aggression, minor aggressive behavior, and illegal activities. In effect, they created a scale of increasing social consequence in terms of the validity of the dependent variable. The first included use of an aggression machine and self-report of aggressive inclination, play with aggressive toys, and miscellaneous simulated aggressive behavior. The second included physical aggression against an object, verbal aggression, and physical aggression against a person below the threshold of serious harm. The third included burglary, grand theft, and seriously harmful violence against a person. Self-report of aggressive inclination was largely represented by responses indicating what the individual would do in hypothetical situations. Thus, it was analogous to the expression of a norm, value, or attitude—a disposition—rather than an intention to behave in the future in a particular way in a specific situation.

that reports linked television and film violence with an undesirable behavioral outcome (they record a sizable negative correlation of $r = -.68$ between average effect sizes and the average ratings of news reports for their fealty to the scientific evidence over six data points between 1975 and 2000). They conclude, with considerable exasperation at the performance of the news media, that “regardless of preference for experimental or non-experimental methods, it has been decades since one could reasonably claim that there is little reason for concern about media violence effects” (p. 485).

Finally, based on Paik and Comstock (1994), the U. S. Surgeon General’s recently released report on youth violence (U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001) identifies greater exposure to television violence between the ages of 6 and 11 years as an early risk factor for the committing of criminal violence equivalent to a felony between the ages of 15 and 18 years (p. 58, Box 4–1). The effect size ($r = .13$) was categorized as falling into the small range, and the report concluded that the effect sizes for both aggression in general and physical aggression—apparently using slightly more liberal criteria than Cohen—achieved the large range. However, about three fourths of the near 20 factors identified as posing early risks for later violence also fell into the small category.

Young people are particularly vulnerable to the influence of television and film violence when they have attributes that predict greater exposure to violent portrayals or greater likelihood of engaging in aggressive or antisocial behavior (Comstock & Scharrer, 1999; U. S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2001). Five such attributes are low socioeconomic status, rigid or indifferent parenting, unsatisfactory social relationships, low psychological well-being, and a predisposition for antisocial behavior. Although there are no data that directly document such interactions, there is data clearly linking these factors to either the independent or dependent variables, and thus logically they would appear to increase vulnerability. Exposure to television and to television violence is inversely associated with socioeconomic status (Comstock & Scharrer, 1999; Thornton & Voigt, 1984). When parent-child communication is open and constructive (in contrast with families where communication is rigid, many topics are avoided, differences in opinion are discouraged, and orders rather than explanations by parents are the rule), there typically is less television viewing by children and less exposure to violent television entertainment (Chaffee, McLeod, & Atkin, 1971; McLeod et al., 1972b). In addition, a variety of delinquent behavior is inversely associated with parental interest in the whereabouts of children and teenagers (Thornton & Voigt, 1984). Psychological discomfort and social conflicts predict greater exposure to television—those under stress, lonely, anxious, in negative moods, or in conflict with others apparently find the medium a satisfying escape and thus score higher in viewing or attraction to television (Anderson, Collins, Schmitt, & Jacobvitz, 1996; Canary & Spitzberg, 1993; Comstock & Scharrer, 1999; Kubey & Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Maccoby, 1954; Potts & Sanchez, 1994). It is clear that the predisposed—those scoring higher in antisocial behavior or possessing attributes

that are correlates of antisocial behavior—are most likely to be affected. Surveys (Belson, 1978; Robinson & Bachman, 1972), experiments (Josephson, 1987; Celozzi, Kazelskis, & Gutsch, 1981), and a meta-analysis (Paik, 1991) all record associations that are greater among or limited to the predisposed. We doubt that it is a necessary condition because results are so consistent for general populations in surveys and experiments, but, if it is, then it is also very widespread. Thus, television violence is most likely to add to the burdens of those who already face considerable challenge in coping with everyday life, and this becomes particularly clear when it is acknowledged that the kind of behavior likely to be increased by violent portrayals is also the kind likely to lead to conflicts with others and clashes with the law.

Two independent analyses concur that among the independent variables responsible for effects on aggression one of the most powerful is violent erotica. Both Paik and Comstock (1994), who examined erotic as well as violent portrayals, and Allen, D'Alessio, and Brezgel (1995) who examined only erotic portrayals, although proceeding somewhat differently (as is usually the case in these matters) and producing somewhat different effect sizes (as would be expected), report effect sizes for violent erotica that are among the highest recorded.

The data also provide an important contribution to the debate over whether it is the sex (Weaver, 1991) or the violence (Donnerstein, Linz, & Penrod, 1987) that is responsible. Effect sizes for violent erotica are consistently higher than they are for erotica without violence. However, coefficients for erotica without violence are consistently positive. When Allen and colleagues (Allen et al., 1995), following the schema developed by the Attorney General's Commission on Pornography (1986), divided their independent variables into portrayals of nudity without sex, erotica (sex without violence), and violent erotica, they found for the first an inverse effect size and for the latter two positive and increasing effect sizes. The answer, then, is that it is both the sex and the violence, with the two creating a powerful joint stimulus.

The inverse effects for nudity and the weaker effects for erotica presumably derive from the absence of cues that would facilitate aggression, including depiction of the participants in sexual behavior as meriting callousness, derision, or contempt. It is tempting to argue that the inverse and weaker effects represent the lower levels of arousal induced, but the finding of Allen and colleagues (Allen et al., 1995) that throughout self-reported arousal was inversely (if modestly) correlated with aggression precludes such a rash inference.

The data bestow considerable confidence that the patterns observed are not the products of methodologically inferior or ecologically questionable undertakings. In neither the early meta-analysis of Hearold (1986) nor the more recent one by Paik and Comstock (1994) does the introduction of measures of study quality and ecological validity alter conclusions with one noteworthy exception. Hearold found that when she confined her analysis to the studies scoring high in methodological quality (which would give the data particular credibility) the outcomes were

symmetrical for antisocial and prosocial portrayals. Antisocial portrayals were associated with a positive effect size for antisocial behavior and a negative effect size for prosocial behavior. Prosocial portrayals were associated with a positive effect size for prosocial behavior and a negative effect size for antisocial behavior. One clear implication is the imposition of a double jeopardy by violent children's programming: greater likelihood of antisocial behavior and lesser likelihood of prosocial behavior by the young viewer.

Hearold (1986) also examined another design element—the matching in experiments of treatment and outcome variables. These experiments involved pure modeling, with the outcomes undeterred by the requirement that the subjects generalize from one situation to another. She found that this design element doubled effect sizes for both antisocial and prosocial behavior. There are two implications. One is that commercial entertainment has less effect than might otherwise be the case because it often fails to match the situations in which viewers find themselves. The other is that experiments with these characteristics should not be taken as offering an effect size likely to be duplicated in everyday life, except when portrayals and behavioral options exactly match.

DISAPPOINTMENT AND SURPRISE

There is also an element that is both disappointing and surprising. Often, exposure to violent portrayals has been a predictor of an attitudinal disposition favorable to aggressive or antisocial behavior, and, often, these outcomes have occurred in experimental designs. As a consequence, exposure in these cases can be said to be the cause of the disposition. For example, in the Paik and Comstock (1994) meta-analysis, a substantial number of the outcomes categorized under the rubric “aggressive intent” ($r = .33$, medium magnitude by Cohen's criteria) consisted of responses indicating what the individual would do in hypothetical situations. Such measures represent attitudes or dispositions rather than clear-cut intentions in regard to specific circumstances. Thus, meta-analysis (and the many individual studies encompassed) provides evidence of a causal link between violence viewing and dispositions. Nevertheless, there is little direct evidence that dispositions are a key and necessary link between the independent and dependent variables—exposure to violent portrayals and aggressive or antisocial behavior.

There is a data set that permits an examination of this issue and possesses attributes that give it unusual credibility. Belson's (1978) sample of London male teenagers was very large (about 1,600) and is the only probability sample in the literature (as a result, it has the inferential nicety of clearly representing a larger population). Belson's measurement was meticulous and statistical analysis assiduous. The respondents were personally interviewed by a conservatively attired male in a clinical setting. Boys were given false names to emphasize the confidentiality of the investigation, and the names were used throughout to encourage forthright

responses. The interviews were unusually lengthy—about 3.5 hours. This is the equivalent of almost 1,000 days of interviewing, an apt reflection of the scale of this enterprise. When it came to aggressive and antisocial behavior, they were asked to indicate whether, within the past 6 months, they had committed an act printed on a card by placing the card in a location clearly designated as representing “Yes,” “No,” or “Not sure.” The intent was to reduce guile resulting from shame or embarrassment by eliminating the need for the respondent to speak about what he had done. The interviewer then engaged in forceful probes in regard to a “Not sure” and the frequency with which a confessed act had been committed. The labeling of these acts as to their seriousness was based on the rating of adult judges. Thus, the aggressive and antisocial outcome measures were sensitive, probing, and rooted in normative social judgments and presumably minimized both guile and conformity to interviewer expectancies. Thus, the data have a strong claim to representing real-world patterns.

Among the variables included in the Belson (1978) survey were a number of items representing attitudinal dispositions—norms, values, and beliefs. He included them as possible outcomes associated with exposure to violent television entertainment. This makes it possible to embark on the path of theory testing and possible revision. I begin with Belson’s findings and then turn to a brief examination of the evidence supporting the popular view that there is an attitudinal or dispositional link between viewing and behavior. Finally, I attempt to resolve any conflicts between the two bodies of evidence—in this case, by positing an alternative path connecting violence viewing to aggressive and antisocial behavior. Belson obtained direct measures of four dispositions—antisocial attitudes, approval of violence, hostile personality traits, and willingness to commit violence—as well as a dimension of behavior with a dispositional aspect, social contagion (antisocial behavior in the company of others). Reliability was high for the first four, which were multiitem scales with 10 or more items for each disposition, whereas the latter represented a variety of antisocial acts. The first four directly represent attitudes, norms, and values. The fifth has a dispositional aspect because it represents indirectly the attitudes, norms, and values implied by the expressed beliefs and behavior of peers. None of these outcomes was predicted by the viewing of violent television entertainment. Thus, there was no evidence of a dispositional link between viewing and behavior.

Much of the research that has been central in the investigation of the relationship between exposure to television and film violence and aggressive and antisocial behavior would seem to assign a central place to attitudes, norms, and values. Both Bandura’s (1986) social cognition and Berkowitz’s (1984, 1990) neoassociationism give considerable weight to the categorizing of acts according to their effectiveness, social approval, and appropriateness for the circumstances. Both theories hold that portrayals with these characteristics are more likely to influence behavior. Such categorizing would seemingly depend on cognitive processes whose terminal state would be a disposition. The conclusion of Eron and Huesmann (1987), in

interpreting a positive correlation in survey data between childhood violence viewing and adult aggressiveness, is representative of many others writing on television violence and antisocial behavior:

It is not claimed that the specific programs these adults viewed when they were 8 years old still had a direct effect on their behavior. However, the continued viewing of these programs probably contributed to the development of certain attitudes and norms of behavior and taught these youngsters ways of solving interpersonal problems which remained with them over the years. (p. 196)

Interpretation thus faces a quandary. The Belson (1978) survey provides strong evidence that attitudes, norms, and values are not invariably a link in real life in the causal chain between exposure and behavior. Numerous experiments also provide convincing evidence that aggression and antisocial behavior are increased when certain factors are present that would seem to operate through cognitive processes—portrayals that depict behavior as effective, socially approved, and appropriate for the viewer, as well as circumstances that place the viewer in the market for some behavioral guidance. These are the contingencies that Comstock and Scharrer (1999) refer to as efficacy, normativeness, pertinence, and susceptibility. They represent, respectively, the degree to which a portrayed behavior is perceived as effective, as evidenced by reward or, for those intrinsically pleasurable, lack of punishment; as socially accepted, approved, or conventional; as relevant to the viewer, such as a perpetrator of the same age or gender or a victim resembling a potential real-life target; and the degree to which the viewer is motivated or rendered vulnerable to being affected by the portrayal.⁵

The Belson (1978) data clearly falsify the hypothesis that certain attitudes and norms (to use the phrasing of Eron and Huesmann, 1987) are a necessary link in the causal chain. The challenge is equally clear. If we accept the Belson finding, we must explain the role that these four factors have other than constituting a link through dispositions. The alternatives—draw a line through the Belson data, impugn the experiments—are not scientifically permissible.

The interpretation that conforms to both sets of evidence is that these factors promote the incorporation and accessibility of the portrayed behavior. Behavioral

⁵ Susceptibility is a factor that has been found often to play a role in the influence of communication. In the case of aggressive or antisocial behavior, it is typically represented by frustration or provocation and in experiments often induced by the rude or insulting behavior of the experimenter. However, it also has been found to operate in other contexts. For example, in the Stanford cardiovascular field experiment (Farquar et al., 1977, 1990) those who scored higher in risk proneness were more influenced by persuasive appeals intended to reduce behavior that contributed to cardiovascular disorder, and in the area of agenda setting (Comstock & Scharrer, 1999) those scoring higher in the need for orientation are more likely to be influenced by the emphases of media coverage in regard to the issues and topics they perceive as important. In each of these three instances, the influence of messages is somewhat contingent on individual motives, needs, and interests.

classes or genres would be influenced because we would expect some generalization, although the effect would be greatest when there was a match between the portrayal and behavioral options. The function of these factors is to govern the salience of classes or genres of behavior in the repertoire of the individual. In terms of the theory of a link between perception and behavior, offered by Dijksterhuis and Bargh (2001), these factors determine the significance or validity as a guide to behavior extended to the behavior portrayed. Efficacy, normativeness, pertinence, and susceptibility would act as gatekeepers, to use communication research jargon.

From this perspective, observation and attitudes, norms, and values often act as competitors rather than the coconspirators they are usually taken for. Attitudes, norms, and values may remain stable while the likelihood of a change in behavior increases. Good people (at least, those with constructive thoughts) may behave badly without any sign of a change in expressed dispositions. This lowers the predictive power of attitudes, norms, and values, which have a notoriously weak resistance to the demands of situational circumstances (Eagly & Chaiken, 1993; Terry & Hogg, 2000) and heightens the predictive power of observation. Efficacy, normativeness, pertinence, and susceptibility become conditions on which the latter, rather than the former, rest.

This revision of theory addresses two nagging puzzles. One is the quite frequent occasion when attitudes, norms, and values, and behavior part ways. The other is the similarly frequent occasion when the enormity of an act seems beyond a contribution by the media. We expect people to be consistent in thought and behavior, and we expect heinous acts to be outside the influence of observation or perception. The revision asserts that there are routes to behavior other than through dispositions (although they sometimes may be crucial) and that role of the media may be modestly confined to gatekeeping but on that account sometimes crucial.

The data support the view that one route by which entertainment affects behavior is analogous to peripheral processing in the ELM. Accessibility or salience is a key element. However, it would be premature to conclude that this is the sole route by which behavioral effects occur. Attitudes, norms, and values surely sometimes play a role. One would occur when these cognitive dispositions and accessibility coincide, which would increase the likelihood of an effect; this would be a special case of susceptibility in operation. Another is when thoughtful motivation enters, such as Bandura's (1986) famous example of a well-contrived (and financially successful) airline bomb extortion attempt following the televising of a movie depicting such a caper. This analysis obviously fits quite well with the general aggression model (GAM) proposed by Anderson and Bushman (2002), where cognitive processes may have an influence but are not a necessary element. The present analysis, however, addresses the specific question of whether attitudes, norms, and values—that is, cognitive elements—are a necessary part of any causal chain where exposure to violent portrayals predicts aggressive or antisocial behavior (as in the Belson data), as much research suggests, and the conclusion is that they are not.

The Belson (1978) data do not support a role for direct effects of attitudes, norms, and values. However, they are consistent with a role for cognitive dispositions through effects on accessibility and salience. In addition, the Belson data have nothing conclusive to say about the possibility that attitudes, norms, and values held by others may create an environment more or less favorable to modes of behavior made accessible or salient by the media. Thus, attitudes, norms, and values remain key concepts in explaining the effects of violent portrayals on aggressive and antisocial behavior although they are not a necessary mediating link between exposure and behavior.

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Between the Ads: Effects of Nonadvertising TV Messages on Consumption Behavior

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Research on the impact of nonadvertising television programs (e.g., series, soap operas, TV movies) on consumption behavior cannot boast the recognition gained by inquiries into the effects of television advertising. The latter research obviously has been built on the assumption that such effects exist and explores variables contributing to the effectiveness of this influence. The research on the influence of nonadvertising television exposure on consumer attitudes and behavior appears to be fragmented and overlooked in the marketing discipline. The major question, “Are the entertaining programs a powerful engine for change in daily consumption activity?” still seems to need further inquiry.

If we turn to experts in the search for answers, we can find strong advocates of the real effects of nonadvertising television programs on consumption behavior. For example, activists of the international organization Soap Operas for Social Change credit soap operas with generating demand for goods like sewing machines and condoms (Williams, 2001). Though the reported effects were witnessed in developing countries, they support the TV producers’ general belief that nonadvertising television programs can encourage positive behavioral changes. The logical question is, to what extent have such claims and hopes been supported theoretically? This is the question that this chapter aims to address.

This chapter focuses specifically on the effects of nonadvertising television programs on consumption behavior and discusses these effects in terms of the psychological processes of encoding, interpretation, and memory. The objective is to analyze how researchers in different fields have conceptually defined and

empirically identified the effects of television viewing on consumers' attitudes toward goods and services and consumer behavior in the marketplace. This research is a response to invitations to investigate the link between marketing and nonadvertising media that has repeatedly sounded in the marketing discipline in recent years. Specifically, Lehmann (1999) urged researchers to broaden their current narrow focus on mass advertising by considering the cumulative effect of marketing and media on consumer welfare. John (1999) welcomed efforts to understand the influence of subtle messages delivered by television. Hirschman and McGriff (1995), who represented an initial step in employing marketing skills toward the application of televised images to addressing social problems, expressed hope that studies like this will lessen destructive consumer behavior. Varey (1999) argued that studying the effects, and not just the effectiveness, of media should help in dealing with the consequences of the wholesale marketization of society.

In light of these academic calls, it is timely to review the existent body of research on the impact of nonadvertising media on consumption behavior. To fill this need, this chapter offers an analysis of reported findings on how and why nonadvertising television has been found to influence consumption behavior. The presented literature review of the academic research conducted in the past 20 years examines the most popular and the most controversial media channel—television. Commercial advertising is excluded from the scope of this work due to the substantial attention that television advertising has already received in marketing literature. In this way, attention is diverted from the omnipresent and often annoying and intrusive commercial messages that prompt audiences to resist and neglect them to those equally ubiquitous but subtle and hidden messages to which customers deliberately expose themselves during the programs.

Specifically, this chapter investigates how television messages are encoded by producers and interpreted by receivers and presents the findings under several headings. After providing a brief historical overview of the phenomenon of television, I illuminate theoretical explanations for the effects of TV on consumption behavior. Second, I summarize a set of empirical evidence of these effects, including both immediate and long-term effects. Third, I analyze research of cultural texts. Finally, I discuss public policy implications, identify some unanswered questions, and suggest directions for future research. In the overall discourse, two major streams of inquiry become visible: one exploring nonadvertising television's effects as emotional enhancers of commercials and the other examining these effects as cognitive enhancers of commercials. Both types of enhancers are seen as mediating the impact of television viewing on consumption behavior.

“OLD” MEDIA UNDER NEW ATTACKS

The mass arrival of television in 1946 is often termed revolutionary, and after the 1949 debut of the TV set in Sears Roebuck catalog, it took only 14 years for the American public to recognize that they received more of their news from television

than from newspapers. Moreover, surveys indicate that since the 1980s, more than two thirds of Americans have regarded TV not only as their primary but also their preferred source of news, and more than half believe it is the most credible source (Dennis, 1989). On the other hand, there were just 3 years between the first sounds of gunshots from televised westerns in the 1955–1956 season and the first formal complaint about TV violence by a U.S. senator. Published in *Reader's Digest* under the title “Let's Get Rid of Tele-Violence” (Kefauver, 1958), this article presumed a direct link between the rising rates of juvenile crime and television viewing and virtually opened up the still ongoing debates about the controversial impact of television on its viewers and society as a whole. (For reviews, see Comstock [this volume] and Shrum [this volume].)

Today, television is attacked by public health specialists for the potential health risks that media exposure presents to children and adolescents, by sociologists for being a time waster and social isolator (Tonn & Petrich, 1998), and by social scientists and public policy officials for the prevalence of violent content. Many of the sins attributed to television's influence have either direct or indirect links with consumption behavior. Materialism, compulsive buying, smoking, and the antisocial consumption of drugs and alcohol are the “sins” that are referred to most often. The overall situation seems to be so critical that the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) suggested that pediatricians eschew televisions in their waiting rooms, provide guidance about media use in the home to parents and children during pediatric visits, and take a media history from patients by asking them about their TV viewing habits (Hogan, 2000). These steps were included in a 5-year, nationwide education campaign, Media Matters, launched by the AAP in 1997 with the purpose to protect youth from the potential harm of media messages and images. Thus, regardless of the dominant character of television, societal attitudes regard this medium as both a threat and an opportunity, a conflict that is rooted in the recognition of TV as a powerful message sender.

STUDYING TV: UNREALISTIC ATTEMPT?

Despite (and perhaps because of) the pervasiveness of television, studying its effects has never been considered an easy task. Yet at the dawn of television, scholars predicted not only the overwhelming popularity of an audiovisual communication channel but also the difficulty of grasping the effects of TV on people's lives. The word *totality* best explains the phenomenon, which resulted from the intervention of TV in personal, political, and social lives. Some scholars even expressed concern over the prospects of possible studies: “Since it [television] has affected the totality of our lives, . . . it would be quite unrealistic to attempt systematic or visual presentation of such influence” (McLuhan, 1964, p. 317). Instead, what seemed a more feasible way of studying these effects was suggested—“to present TV as a complex *gestalt* of data gathered almost at random” (McLuhan 1964, p. 317). Forty years later, however, it is evident that research on the impact of television viewing on

people's lives, including their consumption behavior, has been conducted in two major directions: One stream of research uses quantitative methods and focuses on responses that are outwardly observable; the second approach is characterized by qualitative research. Both directions have the same goal: explaining the effects of TV on various aspects of life. The studies include careful analysis of what is offered on the screen and of how this translates into viewers' daily activities beyond the screen.

Research on the impact of nonadvertising televised messages on behavior of viewers has been conducted in several disciplines and is presented by scholars of communications (e.g., Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & Shanahan, 2002), psychology (e.g., Bandura, 1994), sociology (e.g., Fox & Philliber, 1978), child development (e.g., Potts, Doppler, & Hernandez, 1994), and preventive medicine (e.g., Cooper, Roter, & Langlieb, 2000). The authors agree in defining the place of television in the individual decision-making and judgmental process. The shared theoretical framework assumes two important factors employed by the viewers: direct and indirect experiences. *Direct experience* refers to past activities in which an individual was personally engaged, whereas *indirect experience* includes activities experienced by other people but of which the consumer is aware through two possible sources—a social network, mass media, or both. Thus, indirect experience can be gained through friends, relatives, and neighbors and through television, print media, and radio. But to what extent do nonadvertising messages conveyed by television really matter in an individual's consumption behavior? In the search for the answer to this general question, a substantial body of knowledge has been collectively generated.

Scholars have analyzed statistical descriptions of the audience, engaged in contextual analysis of the television messages and images, offered theoretical explanations and empirical evidence of the mechanism of television's influence, and claimed to find immediate and long-term effects of television watching on the audience. Their findings suggest that after the shift in the public's preference from a print to a visual culture occurred, the artificial reality perpetually portrayed on the TV screen started serving as a subliminal frame of reference for the viewers in their consumption activity while affecting both "good" consumption (e.g., making the right lifestyle choices, developing healthy eating patterns) and "bad" consumption (e.g., smoking, consuming alcohol, doing drugs, practicing overconsumption). These findings are analyzed in the rest of the chapter.

THEORETICAL EXPLANATION FOR THE EFFECTS OF TV ON CONSUMPTION BEHAVIOR

A determined attempt to offer a theoretical explanation for the effects of nonadvertising TV on consumption behavior is what unites the majority of the reported studies. Current research pursuing this goal can be grouped into the examination

of consumption associative and consumption nonassociative television viewing and their effects. Thus, research that explores the explicit consumption context of the television messages or the feelings produced by watching the portrayals of certain products, goods, and services directly associated with their use by the characters of a TV program can be termed under the rubric consumption associative viewing. Examples include the works by Hirschman and Thompson (1997), O'Guinn and Shrum (1997), and Shrum, Wyer, and O'Guinn (1998). In turn, research that is consumption context independent and does not focus on the depicted consumer products and their perception by TV viewers can be termed as research into consumption nonassociative viewing. This stream of research explores overall emotions elicited by the program and examines TV programs as emotional enhancers of the advertisements. Examples include the works by Goldberg and Gorn (1987), Murry, Lastovicka, and Singh (1992), and Murry and Dacin (1996).

Consumption Nonassociative Viewing

The main objective of the consumption nonassociative research is to define which factors facilitate the greater effectiveness of commercials embedded in the program. The scholars engaging in this research mostly have tested what is considered to be conventional advertising wisdom that asserts the following scheme: If the program elicits positive emotions, the viewer will like the program; liking the program, in turn, leads to a positive attitude toward the advertisement; and this attitude is followed by a positive attitude toward the brand advertised. In accordance with this theory, there is empirical evidence that commercials are more effective when placed in happy rather than in sad programs. Thus, building on previous mood research that suggested that the effects of the elicited mood may be evidenced for at least 15–20 min, Goldberg and Gorn (1987) exposed their participants to advertisements embedded in a happy episode about frogs trained to improve their self-image and in a sad episode about the killing of a young child. The authors then asked their participants (among other questions) about their likelihood of purchasing the products advertised in the embedded commercials and demonstrated the difference in responses. Those seeing the happy episode felt happier while watching the commercials than did those who saw the sad episode. The happy episode viewers also demonstrated a stronger intention to purchase the advertised products than did viewers of the sad episode.

However, it has been also argued that these program-elicited feelings do not directly influence attitudes toward the advertisement and brands but rather that viewer attitudes toward the program are what matter (Murry et al., 1992). Thus, dramas that elicit sadness may result in a positive attitude toward the advertisement similar to that produced by the positive-emotion programs, provided that the viewer likes the drama. Going further in this line of research, Murry and Dacin (1996) proposed and proved the hypothesis that “negative emotions elicited by a program will diminish program liking only if viewers believe the program to be either too realistic or personally relevant” (p. 441). This leads to the conclusion that negative

moods elicited by TV viewing are not a threat to the positive attitude toward advertisements and advertised brands when the individual does not feel personally threatened.

Consumption Associative Viewing

Whereas the research into consumption nonassociative viewing mostly explores nonadvertising television programs as emotional enhancers, the study of consumption associative viewing mostly regards TV programs as cognitive enhancers. This stream of research, as well as the previous one, also refers to a relation between advertising and media, which it characterizes as symbiotic. Some of the most sound recent theory-building work was offered by Hirschman and Thompson (1997), who argued that advertising, though certainly a powerful influence on consumption, is not a dominant voice and is being supplanted by mass media nonadvertising messages and images that largely define consumers' beliefs and behavior. The strength of these subtle messages lies in their informal, unobtrusive nature because such mass media texts are not viewed with the same cultivated skepticism as actual advertisements.

By examining the mediating role of nonadvertising forms of media on advertising, Hirschman and Thompson (1997) expanded prior multidisciplinary research that ascertained that media enhance the effectiveness of some advertising by portraying certain products as more appealing than others. In that role, media sort reality into meaningful social categories that provide a frame of reference from which consumers interpret their daily lives (Miller, 1988; Schiller, 1989). This theoretical framework was further developed when Hirschman and Thompson defined three interpretive strategies employed by consumers of televised messages in their relationships with the mass media. First is the inspiring and aspiring mode that is present when a media image is interpreted as representing an ideal self to which the consumer can aspire. The second mode is rather oppositional to the first: Labeled by the authors as deconstructing and rejecting, it refers to consumer relationships with the mass media that are characterized by overt criticism of the artificial and unrealistic quality of the media representation. The third mode is tailoring and personalizing; termed identifying and individualizing, it occurs when consumers negotiate their personal goals and self-perceptions in relation to idealized images presented in the media.

Proposing that consumers' relationships with nonadvertising forms of mass media are an essential aspect of the perceived meaning they derive from advertisements, the authors implied that the process of decoding messages portrayed on the screen is not a completely random and unpredictable affair. Moreover, they emphasized the interactive nature of television, which requires viewers who consume the TV images to actively construct the meanings associated with depicted goods and services. In line with this conclusion, a number of studies have been designed to test whether television consumption can be argued to alter the

perception of reality and subsequently affect consumer behavior (e.g., O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997; Shrum et al., 1998).

Television and the Perception of Reality

Several authors have claimed a causal relationship between viewing television programs and the formation of beliefs about social reality. According to their findings, heavy viewers of television do differ from light viewers in their perception of the real world, which in their mental construction closely reflects that portrayed on the screen. Thus, a positive relation between TV viewing and materialism was found (see Shrum, Burroughs, & Rindfleisch, this volume). Specifically, heavy viewers were found to overestimate the ownership of expensive products to a greater extent than did lighter viewers (O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997). Heavy viewers also overestimate the rate of crime (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980a) and drug and alcohol consumption in society (Shrum & O'Guinn, 1993). They negatively view the elderly as unhealthy and financially poor and perceive women as aging faster than men (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1980b). These works have employed Gerbner's cultivation theory (Gerbner et al., 2002), which begins with an analysis of the aggregated messages embedded in television as a system and compares them with answers received in response to surveys designed to measure the correlation between televised images and viewers' perceptions of the real world. Cultivation theory suggests that heavy exposure to television results in largely viewing the world the way it is depicted on the screen. Thus, the overrepresented possession of certain goods on television (luxury cars, cell phones, nice houses) leads to a perception of a similar level of possession in the real world and subsequently to a distorted picture of reality.

In several attempts at exploring the mechanism by which concepts of the social reality of consumption are constructed, scholars examined the effects of television on perceptions of affluence (Fox & Philliber, 1978; O'Guinn & Shrum, 1997; Shrum, 2001; Shrum, O'Guinn, Semenik, & Faber, 1991) and reported a significant relationship between the two variables. Their findings supported the general hypothesis that heavier viewers of television perceive greater affluence in America than do lighter viewers. This included perceptions related to the ownership of swimming pools, convertible automobiles, use of maids, and the percentage of millionaires.

Cultivation theory, though widely accepted and tested by scholars, elicits some criticism for not providing a thorough explanation of its mechanism and not considering other variables (e.g., people's socioeconomic situation or education) that also could lead to the social judgments and beliefs expressed by participants of studies (Fox & Philliber, 1978; McGuire, 1986). In response to this criticism, some research implicates the availability heuristic as a psychological mechanism responsible for the effects of television viewing on judgmental processes (Shrum, 2001). The availability heuristic refers to a mode of information processing that

links judgments of frequency or probability of occurrence with ease of recall. The availability heuristic was developed by decision scientists Tversky and Kahneman (1973), who suggest that people estimate the prevalence of patterns and events based on how easy it is for them to retrieve the related information from memory. According to the availability heuristic, heavy viewers of TV should have more information received from television accessible in memory because they are exposed to a higher number of televised messages than are light viewers. These messages are stored in the memory over time, and when it comes to making judgments and decisions, heavy viewers of TV retrieve the accumulated information (Shrum et al., 1998). For this reason, heavy viewers should have relevant images (those frequently sent through the media channel) more accessible in memory. Thus, the application of the availability heuristic is seen as responsible for viewers' estimates of the real frequency and probability of events portrayed on the screen, which may explain the psychological mechanism of the cultivation effect.

In addition to the role television plays in consumer socialization, there has been some empirical evidence that it can play a role in consumer acculturation as well. The idea that the televised world is perceived as a close model of the real one and is turned to as a reference point for understanding society's values and beliefs was evident in Reece and Palmgreen's (2000) inquiry into the motives for watching television by foreigners. In a study of Asian Indian graduate students enrolled at American universities, the authors distinguished the motives of acculturation and reflection on values from among eight motives. Having conducted a survey of the convenience sample of 99 students, scholars argued that those subjects who wanted to learn more about current issues in their host country, understand the ways in which American people behave and think, and make American friends spent more time in front of the TV. The respondents also reported substantial exposure to host media back home. This led to assumptions that they were aware of what to expect on the screen and were prepared to decode the images encoded in news and sports coverage and situation comedies and movies—programs defined as preferred in the search for valuable cultural information. Furthermore, the participants of the study were found to deliberately turn to indirect televised experience in the search for answers about real-life experiences in the host country.

Lifestyle-Related Product Choices

The conceptual research into the effects of TV also suggests that consumers' incorporation of television-mediated images of reality into their perceptions of how others live and consume is used during the making of lifestyle-related product choices. Thus, Englis and Solomon (1997) noted that images of affluence transmitted via mass media become objects of desire for many who aspire to this quasi-mythical lifestyle. Conversely, some symbolical images associated with lifestyles that consumers tend to avoid are being stored as a negative mental set of objects. Moreover, the authors strongly assert that these pervasive consumption-rich images replete in

mass media are no mere shadows playing across the screen of popular culture but become equally or even more important than actual behavior observed when consumers subconsciously engage in the construction of lifestyle meanings. Englis and Solomon have argued that these intangible lifestyle meanings are powerful social constructions developed in the minds of consumers and should not be regarded by marketers as secondary. After conducting several studies on consumers' cognitive processing of media and marketing information and their consumption behavior, the scholars suggested a model that assigned the central role of generating and modifying lifestyle imageries to channel intermediaries—those including commercial vehicles (e.g., advertising), popular culture (e.g., television), and media hybrids. Overall, Englis and Solomon stressed that lifestyles should not be understood solely in terms of the actual patterns of behavior that marketers typically measure and use to cluster consumers.

The Promising Future of Hybrids

The use of messages embedded in television programs and labeled hybrids seems to have raised more ethical concerns than conceptual attention. These messages are paid for by the sponsor but are not explicitly identified as being such. A relatively new genre of marketing communication is growing (Balasubramanian, 1994) and is represented by product placements, infomercials, and program tie-ins. It is believed that hybrid messages avoid key disadvantages inherent in commercial advertising (i.e., a sponsor is identified and consumers can view the message with skepticism) and benefit from key advantages provided by commercial advertising, such as the sponsor's total control over the message content and its format. As a result, consumers perceive hybrid messages without any of the resistance they may practice while dealing with explicitly purchased messages. Conceptually, product placement hybrids appear to play a role in influencing consumer behavior similar to that of any other embedded product messages. Thus, Balasubramanian identified several theories on which the expected effects of impacting consumers are built: attribution theory (Mills & Jellison, 1967), the classical conditioning principle (Gorn, 1982), and the modeling paradigm (Bandura, 1994). Attribution theory assumes that television viewers perceive portrayed products without any reporting bias that could be attributed to a paid message. The classical conditioning principle assumes a positive paired-association enhancing product perception when a favorable endorser image (unconditional stimulus) and a product (conditional stimulus) wisely match each other. The modeling paradigm assumes that models demonstrating positive consequences of product use reinforce the process of persuasion.

Public policy officials invite researchers to employ the powerful persuasive potential of hybrid messages for conveying noncommercial messages designed to promote socially desirable consumption behavior. They call for embedding into television programs not so much products as social concepts and argue that the positive effects of such practices have been empirically supported.

GRASPING TELEVISION EFFECTS

The empirical study of television effects is defined by an approach that prompts or analyzes responses that are outwardly observable. These responses may be grouped into those characterized by immediate effects and those defined by long-term impacts. Whereas the studies of immediate effects are usually conducted in the laboratory setting where the researchers experimentally induce the expected effects, the research on long-term effects usually aims at identifying the correlation between television viewing and observable changes in attitude and consumption behavior. Both approaches seem to have had strong advocates. Thus, the proponents of long-term effects find strong support in the cultivation theory proposed by Gerbner et al. (2002). They argue that despite the time, energy, and money invested, the conceptualization of television's effect as a short-term individual change has not produced research that helps understand the distinctive features of television. To them, these features include massive, long-term, and common exposure of large and heterogeneous publics to centrally produced, mass distributed, and repetitive systems of stories (Gerbner et al., 2002).

Another theoretical model of the mass media's effects on individual decision-making can be found in the works of Tyler (Tyler, 1984; Tyler & Cook 1984), who has extensively tested the impersonal impact hypothesis proposed in prior research. According to this hypothesis, decisions are based on the judgments people make. These judgments, in turn, should be divided between those on a personal and those on a societal level. Moreover, the researchers should clearly separate them because the media messages may produce contradictory and independent societal and personal judgments. Thus, the individual, influenced by presumably overrepresented violence on the TV screen, may perceive a similar rate of crime in the surrounding society. However, when it comes to personal judgment, the viewer may not think there is an increasing danger and a high likelihood of being personally affected by crime. For this reason, the decision making and following behavior may not always be ruled by television exposure, even if the viewer is a heavy viewer.

The impersonal impact hypothesis suggests that the impersonal nature of mass media is less effective in influencing personal concerns than in influencing societal concerns. Furthermore, compared with the second type of indirect experience—a social network—mass media is also the least effective in impacting personal judgments. Consequently, mass media is argued to primarily influence judgments only on a general level. However, recently this theory has been questioned because of the implications that it poses for the processes involved in the construction of the different judgments. Shrum and Bischak (2001) point to several definitional and analytical ambiguities about the relation between type of risk judgment (personal/societal) and experience modality (direct/indirect). They argue that the definitions of personal risk and mass media representations are not clear and leave room for different interpretations. Shrum and Bischak also suggest that the types of

analysis used to test the impersonal impact hypothesis ignore the assessment of interaction between direct experience and media information. Thus, further research on the impersonal impact hypothesis is invited.

Long-Term Effects

Evidence of long-term effects of nonadvertising television has been proclaimed by several authors. DeJong and Winsten (1990) credited 80 network television episodes broadcast during two seasons for more responsible public alcohol consumption and the tendency to perceive the concept of a designated driver as a social norm. Evans et al. (1981) reported that social modeling films can help deter smoking in adolescents. An example of the probable positive effect of a media campaign on the population's beliefs and healthy behavior in respect to cardiovascular diseases (CVD) was offered in Finnegan, Viswanath, and Hertog's (1999) interpretive analysis proposing a causal relationship between the two. The authors referred to an overall decline in smoking in the country and a parallel increase in public opinion that smoking causes heart disease and cancer. They interpreted the positive outcome and evidence of the secular trend in CVD-related beliefs, knowledge, and behavior as due to the strong influence of national media that had offered numerous heart disease stories, including about 5–10 per month on three TV networks alone. Their analysis suggested the potential strength of media influence when the media are guided by organized activity geared not only toward building an individual's awareness but also toward creating an encouraging environment. This activity, known in the marketing discipline as social marketing and based on agenda-building models of communication, provides for a unified approach to influencing social, behavioral, and policy change, where television as a powerful media channel takes a leading role.

Immediate Effects

There also exists a strong feeling among communication theorists that televised influence is best defined in terms of the content people watch rather than the amount of television viewing (Hawkins & Pingree, 1982). The studies in support of content's predominance are usually conducted in controlled laboratory settings. A series of them have been designed to empirically test the immediate effects of television influence on behavior. An example is a study that investigated the impact of risk taking by characters in television programs on children's willingness to take physical risk (Potts et al., 1994). This problem has not only medical aspects but also a number of social ones because risk-prone behavior, especially when prompted in immature children and vulnerable teenagers, may later have direct links to such antisocial consumption behavior as drug and alcohol use. Potts, Doppler, and Hernandez assigned a group of 50 children ages 6 to 9 years, to three experimental conditions—television stimulus programs with infrequent physical risk taking, programs with frequent risk taking, and no TV stimuli. Their results

indicated that children exposed to high-risk TV programs self-reported higher levels of willingness to take risk than did those exposed to low- or no-risk TV programs. The authors interpreted their results as "evidence of a small effect that may accumulate into a larger effect across the many hours of TV viewed routinely by most children" (p. 328). Moreover, they argued that even relatively innocuous and humorous animated cartoons may result in a previously unidentified impact on children via the observational learning process because risk-taking television characters are rarely punished and even glamorized.

It is clear that for ethical reasons laboratory studies cannot be designed to elicit strong effects proving the negative influence of television watching. The body of research exploring negative impact is more inclined to apply survey and observational and interpretive methods. Consequently, the findings are usually suggestive. The typical example is a study by Distefan, Gilpin, Sergeant, and Pierce (1999) that explored whether movie stars who smoke on and off screen may encourage adolescents to start smoking. After running a multivariate statistical analysis of data gathered in the 1996 California Tobacco Survey of more than 6,000 teenagers, the authors claimed that the suggestive influence of movie star smoking on their fans' tendency to start smoking was evident and only slightly weaker than the influence of smoking by friends and family members. Though the findings did not establish that smoking portrayed in films directly leads adolescents to smoke, the study supported the idea of a reversed causal order in that adolescents accepting smoking tend to favor actors and actresses associated with smoking. The results prompted Distefan et al. to send the alarming message that stars have the potential to be much more powerful role models for youth smoking behavior than parents and teachers, a claim that certainly has public policy implications and supports the use of televised appeals by stars to prompt desirable consumption behavior.

In this light, Hirschman and McGriff's (1995) study provided a novel empirical attempt to examine possible therapeutic uses of motion pictures in drug rehabilitation programs. The study, designed to apply marketing theory and method toward assisting the treatment of addiction as a social problem, was conducted in a real-life setting. Recovering alcoholics and drug addicts were exposed to films that they viewed on a television monitor and were then asked to fill out a questionnaire while evaluating the accuracy of the portrayal of addiction on the screen and the ability of the films to stimulate their recovery. Having analyzed the data, the authors concluded that two factors defined certain films' stronger constructive effect: The stories were not overly graphic or violent, and the films modeled not only addiction but also a path to recovery. In contrast, the more extreme portrayals of addiction tended to stimulate neutral or negative response in some viewers who did not identify themselves with the portrayed images and thus led the viewers to reject an intended positive message. With this experiment, for which four films with addiction stories were carefully chosen, Hirschman and McGriff enhanced the trend of research into cultural texts, including those presented on television screens, which leads directly to the next stream of research.

RESEARCH ON CULTURAL TEXTS

The methodological practice of examining the content of television programs has been termed telethnography and applied to explorations of the televised presentation of products and their surrounding consumption environment (Sherry 1995; Wells & Anderson, 1996). It is argued that the method provides rich data for understanding the mental images attached by customers to products and services. In addition, these meanings are vital to understanding the exchange value of the products in the marketplace. Consequently, thorough analysis of product classes (e.g., automobiles, credit cards, breakfast cereals) allows for developing effective promotional campaigns (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997).

In one of the first attempts to explore the domain of televised narratives under the marketing angle, Hirschman (1988) explored the ideology of consumption encoded within two, (at the time) immensely popular television series, *Dallas* and *Dynasty*. She investigated the messages the series transmitted about consumption, how prominent characters behaved as consumers, and what their consumption behavior signified. Through the hybrid structural-syntactical method, Hirschman explored the symbolic meanings of products and the ways in which they were linked to actions and outcomes in a televised series. Her findings proposed that popular television programs are strong vehicles of consumption ideology, which also serve as vehicles of consumers' projective self-reflection.

It is in a proposed model of the dynamic relationships between consumption practices and cultural texts that Hirschman, Scott, and Wells (1998) presented a method of interpreting the symbolism of consumption practice and its symbolic depiction on the screen. They used data on coffee drawn from advertising and television programming and incorporated a broad historical and sociological perspective into their discursive model. Their main theoretical conclusion was not limited to highlighting the power of television programs that constantly inform consumers' beliefs and affect their behavior. To Hirschman, Scott, and Wells, it is important to remember that these effects are not isolated because they cooccur in media time adjacent to television commercials and thus are worth being included in the set of variables influencing consumers' perception of products and services. The model also encouraged cross-cultural research application and examination of how specific product categories are portrayed in other cultures.

Exploration in this area has been implemented in some marketing studies. Thus, a content analysis of consumption imagery in music television shown in the United States (MTV) and Sweden (MTV-Europe) suggested that the American sample of videos contains more consumption imagery and presents a higher frequency of brand mentions than those videos to which Swedish viewers are exposed (Englis, Solomon, & Olofsson, 1993). Thus, only 14.9 percent of the Swedish sampled videos contained brand mentions versus 38.9 percent of the videos sampled in the United States. Moreover, the findings revealed several differences in consumption imagery as a function of musical genre. Thus, rap videos consisted of more

dark-side consumption images (alcohol, weapons, and drugs), heavy metal favored band-related products, and dance music conveyed more fashion messages. Considering music television to be an important agent of adolescent socialization, the authors highlighted the importance of studying consumption-relevant content of music to better predict and understand the effects of music on consumers, particularly young consumers.

DISCUSSION AND PUBLIC POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Though it is often claimed that most of the inquiry into media's effects has so far been behavioral and focused on responses that are outwardly observable (Walsh, 2000), the careful review of research on the effects of nonadvertising television on consumption behavior has demonstrated that this topic also has been marked by the incorporation of analysis of cultural texts and strong attempts at theory building. All these areas of research provide strong evidence that television functions "to survey the environment for us, to socialize us into society and culture, and to entertain and sell us things" (Finnegan et al., 1999, p. 50). But, because of its ubiquity, TV makes it really difficult to distinguish those effects caused solely by television viewing, and the functions of television can be indeed compared to the "invisible operation of bacteria" (McLuhan, 1964, p. 320).

Methodologically, the main challenge researchers face today is that there is presumably no authentic control group—people not affected by the phenomenon of television. For this reason, studies are often criticized for employing a nonrepresentative sample. In addition, there is no clear agreement among scholars on the definitions of light and heavy viewers. Most research refers to calculations of the number of hours that the respondents self-report TV watching. This way the boundary between heavy and light viewing remains arbitrary and vague, and an individual who may only watch sports programs can easily be referred to as a heavy viewer.

Another challenging point is the choice of methods. Whereas some scholars favor purely empirical studies, believing that laboratory-run experiments can test the power of TV influence on its audience and thus arm the public with scientifically proven evidence, others question the limitedness of such studies. Thus, Brown and Cantor (2000) have argued that "any experimental manipulation may be just a drop in the bucket compared with the massive exposure to the same kind of content" (p. 3) in everyday lives and that often the focus of research interest lies in long-term attitude or behavioral change rather than short-term effects.

Seen in this light, it seems especially suitable that marketing researchers studying television effects have experimented with methods themselves and have included in their operational set such methods as telethnography (Sherry, 1995), the hybrid structural-syntactical method (Hirschman, 1988), historical discourse (Hirschman et al., 1998), and the application of grounded theory (Hirschman &

Thompson, 1997). This range of methods has helped explore not only immediate but also long-term effects of exposure to television on consumption behavior.

The recognition by scholars of the importance of studying nonadvertising television is only the first step. The next step should be the exploration of differential effects of TV messages and images on viewers. It is evident now that early models of mass media effects assumed a homogeneous audience and that invitations to conduct differential effects research and explore selective exposure more systematically have become more pronounced lately (Brown & Cantor, 2000; Roe, 2000; Walsh, 2000). Scholars have called for an examination of the mediating effects of such variables as education, gender, socio economic status, family life, ethnicity, and cognitive development and for exploration of which attributes make messages more powerful and influential for different groups. They propose that television's impact is often disputed not because it is not always visible but because effects often accumulate over time and are obscured by the individual differences of the viewers.

Previous research indicates that gender is one of the most fundamentally differentiating factors in media use in terms of both quantity and content preferences (Roe, 2000). Thus, boys are more likely than girls to have a television in their bedrooms, they tend to spend more time in front of the TV, and they prefer watching action, crime, sports, science fiction, and war programming, whereas girls rate music, talk shows, and soaps higher. Only comedy seems to attract equal attention. It is also known that boys watch more animated cartoons (Huston, Wright, Kerkman, & Peters, 1990), that African American and Hispanic youngsters are more likely than White peers to have TV sets in their bedrooms, and that TV viewing is the most substantial during early childhood and declines in middle adolescence (Roberts, 2000). These data provide a valuable starting point for further inquiry.

Many researchers have already empirically highlighted the importance of exploring mediating variables. Granting media's influence, including that of television, for positive change in the public's attitude toward smoking and health disease prevention, several scholars from different countries have provided evidence that not all sociodemographic groups have benefited equally from media information (Brannstrom & Lindblad, 1994; Dennis, 1989; Finnegan et al., 1999). According to these scholars' findings, people with fewer years of formal education or of lower socioeconomic status demonstrated only modest improvements in risk knowledge, which suggests that the phenomenon of a knowledge gap in information does not seem to be reduced by media.

Though age differences in information processing have long been reported, it is especially important to recall the studies with a consumption context. Thus, it has been claimed that young children demonstrate a better ability to process audiovisual televised information than solely audio transmissions (Peracchio, 1992), and the elderly better process consumer information learned from television than from print media (Cole & Houston, 1987).

Hirschman and Thompson (1997), in their study of motivational relationships between viewers and televised messages, reported to have discovered age- and

gender-based differences in the interpretations of television's appeal. According to their findings, older people seem to express a more inspirational relationship with media images and more often refer to some of them as an ideal self to which they can aspire. The scholars also discerned a major difference between men's and women's interpretations of media messages with regard to the perceived need to resist them on the basis of being unreal and artificial. Whereas many of their female participants described themselves as resisting the distorting influences of televised messages, the male participants reported their ability to stand outside these influences.

Another potential area for future research was pointed out by Englis and Solomon (1997), who believe that the role of cultural gatekeepers, including television, is overlooked with regards to symbolic encoding. According to these researchers, the process of how media select and design consumption imagery that is passed on to consumers through media channels needs more examination. Similarly, the process of how consumers decode product messages also deserves more exploration.

Shrum et al. (1998) found that the order of data collection might affect the results and that it matters what is measured first—television viewing or the estimates. Consequently, more research is needed to test how the order of data collection may affect the results. In terms of data collection, it could also be especially appropriate, given the nature of media research, to respond to Lehmann's (1999) challenge to marketers to explore nontraditional ways of gathering data and not to ignore facts reporting—data widely accessible to the public and offered in news reports. Such examples of potential data collection could be presented by a print media story about a new trend evident among singers. This particular story goes that singers introduce lucrative clothing lines while singing lyrics that mention which brands are hot and recording music videos that show how to wear these clothes (Herman-Cohen, 2001). Another story describes barbers in Afghanistan who were jailed for providing local males with popular haircuts styled after the American actor Leonardo DiCaprio (Wallwork, 2001). These real-life television effects were not prompted in the laboratory setting, but scholars nevertheless could try to incorporate them in their research conducted in controlled settings.

Since the advent of television in 1946, researchers have actively speculated on the role of television in influencing people's behavior, attitudes, and knowledge. The phenomenon of television is still full of contradiction. It is depicted as a threat and as an opportunity, it can promote and deter behavior, it can encourage positive and negative attitudes, it can lead to socially desirable and avoidable effects, it can advocate consumption or abstention from consumption, and television viewing itself can be intimate and social, global and local, innocent and evil, passive and active, cheap and expensive. Because of this conflicting nature, television poses numerous public policy implications; after half a century of research scholars recognize they still know little about the extent or consequences of television's

influence (Brown & Cantor, 2000), and public health specialists are unclear about how best to advise parents and children about media use in the home (Hogan, 2000). Public policy officials ask scholars to study the effects of TV portrayals of tobacco, alcohol, and illicit drug use, urge parents to be more involved in children's media exposure, and encourage viewers to resist the potentially harmful impact of television.

In a changing media environment that embraces new channels of communication, the "old" media of television has not yet been relegated to secondary status. In light of the increasing tendency to simultaneously use multiple media, television still remains a powerful shaper and mirror of consumers' minds, lives, and experiences. The disturbing prediction is that because of information overload we may witness the decline of credible fact (Braman, 1993), and for this reason it will become "harder to distinguish between what is on-screen and in reality" (Walsh, 2000, p. 72), what is experience and what is fiction. Thus, the characters in television programs and the products they will use will even more define the consumers' perception of their surrounding environment.

This review of the body of knowledge accumulated by research on the effects of television on consumption behavior suggests that both marketers and public policy officials need a working knowledge of televised messages to be able to communicate their goods and ideas. Because television viewing is argued to have a strong impact on the associations consumers have with lifestyles, both aspired and avoided, the media gatekeepers' choices revealed on the screen should be constantly monitored for information about current and future consumption trends. This task becomes particularly necessary in light of assertions that producers of TV programs "read" from present consumer behavior—a conclusion that leads to a two-tiered perspective on the encoding and decoding of lifestyle information from media sources (Englis & Solomon, 1997). In addition, this behavior also demands the investigation of whether the strength of nonadvertising television effects depends on viewers' involvement with the program (Murry & Dacin, 1996).

Many research questions that go unanswered have direct links to public policy issues. Thus, what implications appear at the societal level, and is it good or bad for the public when TV viewers perceive the real world as a more affluent place than it is in reality (O'Guin & Shrum, 1997)? Does the heavy TV exposure of children and teenagers make them socially savvy or more materialistic and greedy? Does it teach them the value of money and how to spend it (Brown & Cantor, 2000)? Does TV promote compulsive and violent behavior by portraying risk-taking television characters (Potts et al., 1994)? Though television violence has probably received more scrutiny than any other area (see Comstock, this volume), hot debates about the possible contribution of television violence to antisocial behavior haven't so far been explicitly linked to consumer behavior. Assuming there are causal relationships between the violent images abundant on TV and the aggressive behavior of their recipients, it is worth exploring how consumption behavior changes in a crime-ridden society, town, or neighborhood. There is a

need to examine both immediate effects (demand on guns, violent toys, or crime-preventive goods and services, including locks, insurance) and long-lasting effects (lifestyles, values, etc.).

The final and perhaps most socially important question is whether the reported findings can be used to reduce the antisocial consequences of televised messages and enhance their positive potential. Can academic studies, as some researchers optimistically hope (Hirschman, 1991), contribute to solving destructive social problems based on compulsive and addictive consumer behavior?

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Media Factors That Contribute to a Restriction of Exposure to Diversity

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The theme of this book, blurring the lines of media, is significantly large to span such topics as product placement within various media forms (e.g., television, movies, videogames) and genre (e.g., drama, sports), the impact of media-based product exposure on different audience segments (e.g., age, gender, ethnicity), media cultivation of personal values and self-image, and individual difference and situational factors posited to moderate these media-related effects. It naturally follows that nearly all of the phenomena explored in these chapters reflect two forms of stimulus processing: apparent or subliminal (see Erdelyi & Zizak, this volume). *Apparent processing* is the mental processing that occurs at the conscious level, whereas *subliminal processing* denotes the mental processes that occur at the subconscious or preconscious level (e.g., see Bargh, 2002). But what happens when no processing occurs as a result of simply not exposing oneself to a stimulus, or when minimal processing occurs as a result of a conscious or subconscious choice?

Within our daily lives, as a result of limited processing capacity or limited time or energy constraints, we often select to enhance our exposure to certain stimuli, while at the same time we limit or restrict our exposure to other stimuli (e.g., Lynch & Srull, 1982; Shiffrin, 1976). The stimuli we do process are typically triggered by a need to fulfill certain motivations or by the nature of the situations in which we find ourselves. We will naturally be led to process certain stimuli, while limiting or eliminating exposure to other stimuli. Although the typical questions posed by social scientists concern the nature of the stimuli being processed (for examples in

consumer information search, see Beatty & Smith, 1987; Punj & Staelin, 1983), perhaps an equally important question concerns the nature and consequence of what is not being processed or what is minimally being processed. It is proposed here that much of this minimized or missing stimuli is of a diverse nature. Thus, this exposure trade-off process creates a naturally occurring restriction of exposure to diversity.

I previously put forth a model as a framework for designating and examining the internal and external antecedent conditions and the subsequent consequences that result from restricting exposure to diversity (Schumann, 2002). This chapter reviews the phenomenon of restricting exposure to diversity, reviews the important relationships in the aforementioned model, and provides specific attention to describing relevant media factors that influence the phenomenon.

RESTRICTING EXPOSURE TO DIVERSITY

What does restricting exposure to diversity mean? The definition employed here is as follows: “the purposeful or non-purposeful restriction of exposure to available messages about the characteristics, culture, values, beliefs, points-of-view including worldviews, preferences, and behaviors of those who we believe may be different from us.”

Not only will the subject of exposure restriction center around people, but this phenomenon is also viewed as it might apply to objects that are unfamiliar to us (e.g., international brands of products). Restricting exposure concerns the basic processing strategies that employ mental categorization in a manner that is consistent with, and reinforces, one’s self-identity. *Self-identity* refers to notions of the present self as well as what one aspires to be.

Let’s take an example. When the question “Do you know anyone who only listens to conservative talk radio or who just reads liberal or conservative columnists or who just views the liberal news networks?” is asked of groups, inevitably a significant number of people raise their hands and even point to themselves. We each have a tendency to focus on messages that reinforce the kind of person we perceive ourselves to be or to whom we aspire to be compared. As such, we may miss a significant amount of information about those individuals in groups who are not like us or about unfamiliar objects.

PRECEDENT FOR THE CONCEPT

Over the past 60 years, the notion of restricting exposure to diversity has been discussed. Theodore Newcomb (1947), in referring to the autistic person as one who is motivated by a focus on her/himself, suggested that mutual avoidance precludes opportunities for acquiring information that might disconfirm perceptions of the

other's motives and character. He also reflected that misperceptions and distrust between groups are fed by a lack of contact between members of different social categories.

Gordon Allport (1954), in his seminal book titled *The Nature of Prejudice*, stated that human groups tend to stay apart from each other. He explained this phenomenon in terms of basic motivational principles to include ease, least effort, congeniality, and pride in one's own culture. Allport noted that people who stay separate have few channels of communication. Also in the prejudice literature, Stephan and Stephan (1984) propose and support a model whereby a lack of contact between groups promotes ignorance, which in turn promotes anxiety and frustration, assumed dissimilarity, and stereotyping.

Atkin (1985), in expanding the notion of selective exposure beyond reduction of cognitive dissonance, suggested that selective exposure can reconfirm one's beliefs, values, attitudes, and behaviors and fulfill one's sought-after affective states. In a similar vein, from the recent debate between trait theorists (e.g., Wiggins 1973, 1997) and situationalists (e.g., Mischel, 1968, 1990) over the differential impact on behavior, the point was made that we actively choose situations that reflect and reinforce our self-concepts (Ickes, Snyder, & Garcia, 1997; Snyder, 1981; Swann, 1987; Swann & Read, 1981; Tesser, 1988; Tesser & Paulhus, 1983). Thus, we are likely to place ourselves in situations and expose ourselves to information that reflects our values and present or aspired lifestyle. In point of fact, Ickes and his colleagues (Ickes et al., 1997) found that people tend to avoid dispositionally incongruent situations (e.g., Furnham, 1981). In selected situations where incongruity exists, people tend to resolve the incongruity to favor their personality (Srull & Karabenick, 1975; Watson & Bauml, 1967).

There are also external forces that are proposed to facilitate exposure restriction. James Turow, in his book titled the *Breaking Up America* (1997), spoke about how advertisers have segmented the market, with one result being a significant reduction of exposure to messages aimed at other target markets. He states, the following:

I noticed that media were increasingly encouraging people to separate themselves into more and more specialized groups and to develop distinctive viewing, reading, and listening habits that stressed differences between their groups and others . . . marketers look for splits in the social fabric and then reinforce and extend the splits for their own ends. (p. ix)

More recently, Cass Sunstein, a legal scholar writing in the political science arena, revealed his concern regarding the interactive element of the Internet. In his book titled *Republic.com*, Sustein (2001) suggests that our increasing ability to control (filter) the news- and issues-related verbiage we receive via interactive electronic media (i.e., Internet) may likely cause a restriction of exposure to other points of view. This one-sided exposure, he warns, will likely lead to a break down in practiced democracy.

Finally, Todd Gitlin, a media sociologist, writing in his 2001 book titled *Media Unlimited*, states the following:

An unavoidable consequence of all the flashes and shouts for attention, all the message casters casting their messages simultaneously more or less in the same direction, is clutter and cacophony. As a result, when we pay attention to any particular signal, we must pay inattention elsewhere. Coping, in other words, demands a willed myopia. Everyone learns not only to see but not to see—to tune out and turn away. (pp. 118–119)

ANTECEDENTS AND CONSEQUENCES

What drives this tendency to restrict exposure to diversity and what are the consequences of the phenomenon? A comprehensive model is offered here that denotes the internal and external antecedents that predict the level of exposure to diversity as well as a set of ordered consequences resulting from the phenomenon. Its major components are reviewed in the next sections (see Fig. 13.1a; 13.1b).

Internal Antecedents

The internal antecedents in the model reflect the motivations, fulfillment strategies, inclinations to restrict or expand one's experience, and self-directed exposure leading to a level of exposure to diversity. A model must begin somewhere, and this model commences by enumerating five motivational states thought to contribute to differentiated levels of exposure to diversity. Borrowed from Maslow (1954) and Erikson (1980), these motives include: (1) basic needs, (2) social needs, (3) emotional needs, (4) instrumental needs, and (5) ego-sustaining needs. Although the first four are viewed as contributing to the fifth, each individually has the potential to lead to a restricting of exposure. Consider the following examples for each in turn.

To fulfill Maslow's basic needs of security or safety, one might quickly settle on selecting a solution to a threat. This solution may come as a result of previous experience where a specific solution worked in the past to end the threat. Thus, rather than exploring other avenues of response, the tendency to immediately default to the known solution eliminates the need to expose oneself to other options that may be different from those considered in the past.

In fulfilling affective needs, individuals often attempt to manage their feeling states. For example, a candy bar or an ice cream cone may instantly change the mood of a child (or adult). Likewise, a shopping spree may be just what the doctor ordered to remove one from a funk. Perhaps, for some, boredom can be alleviated through the selection of a certain genre of television programming

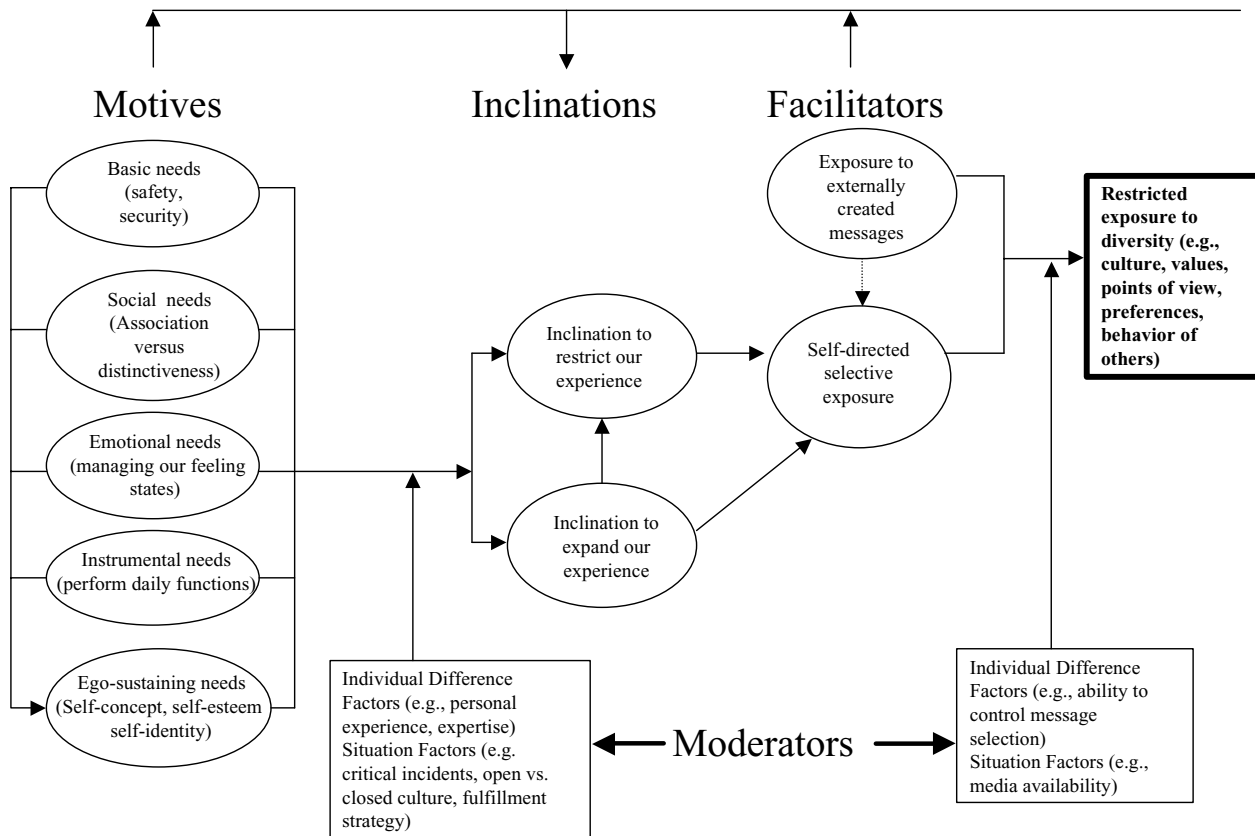


FIG. 13.1a Antecedent factors and relationships. From "Media and Market Segmentation Strategies as Contributing Factors to Restricted Exposure to Diversity: A Discussion of Potential Societal Consequences," by D. W. Schumann, 2002. Reprinted with permission.

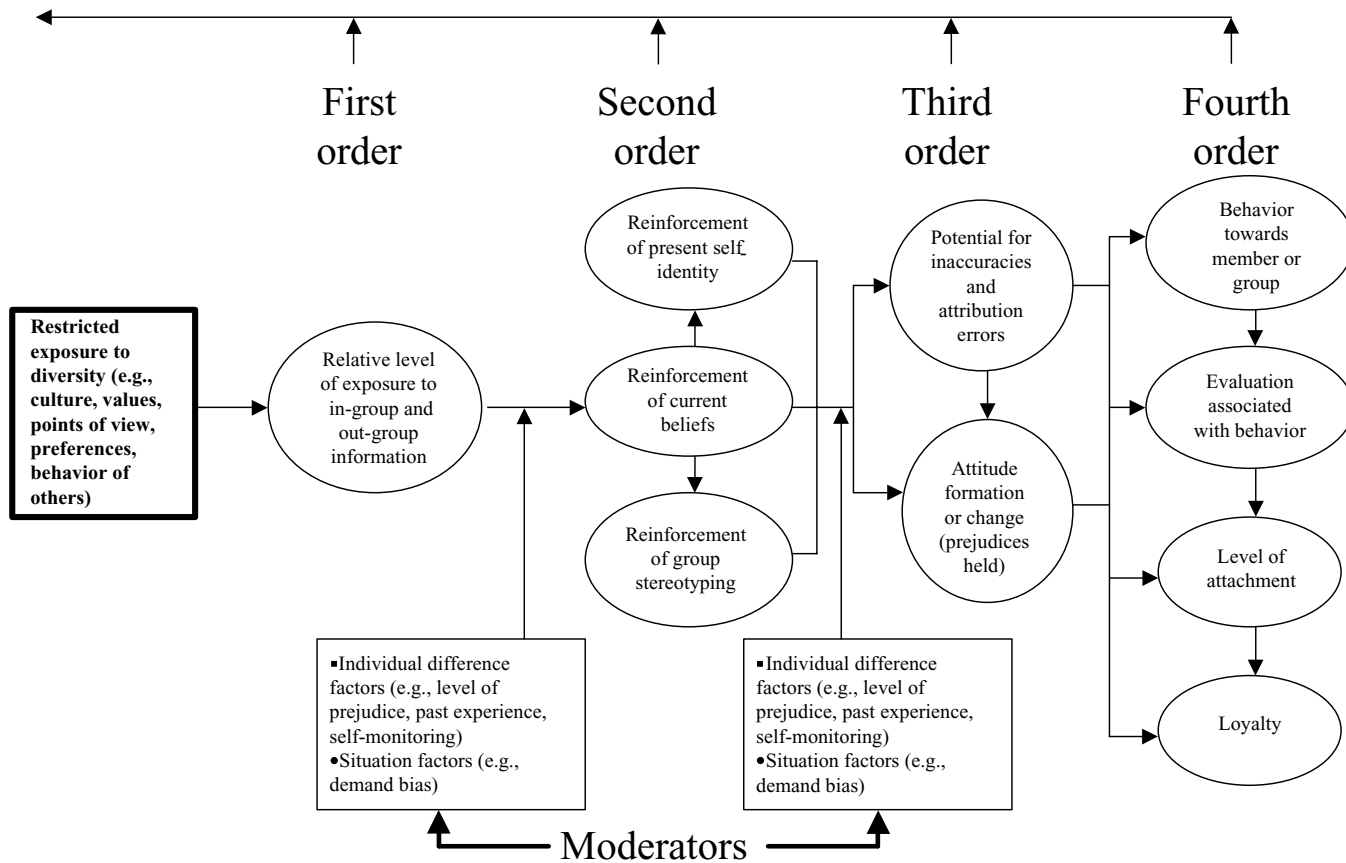


FIG. 13.1b Consequence factors and relationships.

(e.g., watching a sitcom). There are many ways in which people change or alter their affective feeling states (for more on this topic, see Gardner, Schumann, & Walls, 2002). But in many cases, tried and true solutions are repeated. One learns that one's motivation to alter a mood can be fulfilled in a specific way, and thus other means of altering a mood state are often ignored or not considered. Although people may claim they look to buy something different for a change of pace, what they buy is rarely radically different from that which has been purchased in the past. In most cases, one just doesn't stray very far from that which has a sense of familiarity.

Instrumental needs reflect the motivation to complete tasks. In many cases, we resign ourselves to what we know in defining how we carry out a task. We also tend to place ourselves in common situations that call for an existing problem-solving script. When faced with a new task, we first consider what problem-solving information is available from our existing schema. If that fails to provide an adequate solution, some people give up altogether, whereas some begin to think out of the box. It is here that diverse solutions are often considered. Thus, critical situations and how we handle failure are thought to be important moderating factors.

Finally, these four motives contribute to a fifth motivation—the need to feel good about oneself. Enhancing one's self-esteem or self-concept can be accomplished through interacting with a certain set of people who make one feel good or repeatedly placing oneself in situations where one's expertise can be demonstrated and even be useful. An example of these latter situations can be found in our professional career activities, where our expertise is often needed and appreciated and our self-concept is typically enhanced.

Based on the nature of the need (interacting with one or more prescribed moderating variables as noted in the model), individuals are likely to have an inclination to either expand their experience or restrict it. Indeed, the expansion of experience may itself be restrictive. For example, when individuals seek to expand their knowledge, they might only look in known places. On the other hand, when people seek to expand their knowledge, this objective has the potential to lead to an increase in exposure to diversity. However, in most cases, even an expansion of knowledge will eventually cease or diminish, and the inclination to restrict new knowledge will take over as one considers eventual actions. Possible moderators that guide inclination type (i.e., restrict or expand experience) include individual difference factors, such as personal experience and expertise, as well as situational factors, such as a critical incident (which might lead to an inclination to expand knowledge; e.g., Americans reading the Koran after the September 11th tragedy), an open or closed culture, or the need fulfillment strategy (hedonic vs. instrumental).

Finally, on the internal antecedent path, the inclination to restrict or extend experience will lead to the level of self-directed selective exposure. Atkin (1985) noted two explanations for selective exposure that are consistent with the antecedent notions discussed previously. He posits that selective exposure results from either a guidance orientation (e.g., novices searching for information) or a reinforcement

orientation. The reinforcement orientation is believed to explain selective exposure as used to reduce dissonance (Festinger, 1957), reaffirm one's position or behavior, or seek positive affect. Because of the tendency to seek experiences that reinforce self-identity, individuals will more likely selectively expose themselves to stimuli consistent with that reinforcement and thus increase the potential for restricting exposure to diversity.

External Antecedents

The internal antecedents previously described focus on the individual as a contributor to restricting one's own exposure to diversity, but there are also several identified external mechanisms that serve as possible antecedents to the phenomenon. One important contributor is found in the actions of market segmentation, both in terms of strategy and the tools employed by marketers to better target products and services to likely users. Market segmentation is typically viewed in a positive light for several reasons: It matches products (programs) with consumer needs and desires, it reduces the costs associated with promotion and distribution (theoretically passed on to the consumer), it reduces the time the consumer spends in search and purchase activity, it enhances the collection of more accurate and timely market data, and it keeps undesired segments away from the product.

However, market segmentation may have a negative side that is rarely considered (for exceptions, see Schumann, 1999; Turow, 1997). One consequence of market segmentation is the tactical focus on audience-related stimuli, while minimizing or negating exposure to other stimuli. Through means such as direct marketing and positioning of product advertising within specific media formats, individuals are bombarded with opportunities to view images that reflect their lifestyles, existing values, and opinions. Target marketing strategies purposely minimize exposure of the target audience to other, diverse alternatives.

A set of media-related factors are also identified because they contribute to restricting exposure to diversity. These are reviewed in depth later in this chapter.

Consequences

The model offers a set of ordered consequences based on the intergroup bias literature (for comprehensive reviews, see Brewer & Miller, 1996; Hewstone, Rubin, & Willis, 2002). The intergroup bias literature suggests that individuals naturally support groups they either presently belong to or to which they aspire membership (in-groups), and will either ignore, stereotype, or denigrate those in groups in which they do not perceive themselves as members (out-groups). There is a long-standing literature based in social psychology that provides strong support for the in-group bias, while providing clear, yet moderated, evidence for an out-group bias.

The first consequence of restricting exposure to diversity is an imbalance that favors attention to in-group information as opposed to out-group information. Individuals will likely take in significantly larger amounts of in-group information

while minimizing encoding of out-group information. This one-sided exposure is believed to reinforce self-identity, currently held beliefs, and stereotypes about out-groups (second-order consequences). In turn, these reinforcements are posited to affect the belief system and increase the potential for inaccuracies (i.e., Judd & Park, 1993) and a host of attribution errors. The latter would include attribution of outcome to behavior (Ross & Sicoly, 1979), adaptation of a self-serving attribution error to groups (Pettygrew, 1979), the potential to overestimate the frequency with which out-group members act in stereotypical fashion (illusory correlation: Chapman, 1967; Chapman & Chapman, 1969), the probability of reaching a false consensus (Ross, Greene, & House, 1977), and the probability of a self-fulfilling prophecy (Jussim, Eccles & Madon, 1996; Mertin, 1957).

These inaccuracies and attribution errors may contribute to the formation of attitudes based on prejudicial beliefs. These beliefs and attitudes will in turn lead to actions or behaviors that are arguably restricted by the lack of exposure to out-group information. Selection of options will be limited. The end result is an individual who, either through his or her own means or through external facilitators, is making choices with a relatively narrow set of options. Satisfaction with choices is based on a limited set of comparison standards; thus, there may be little opportunity to develop attachments or loyalty.

MEDIA FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE RESTRICTION OF EXPOSURE TO DIVERSITY

The model reviewed previously refers to certain external antecedents that include various media-related factors. The following sections address six characteristics of today's media environment that are thought to influence the restriction of exposure to diverse peoples, information, and points of view.

The Media Stimulation Curve

The media stimulation curve is a graduated curve of media stimulation (note Fig. 13.2). The x -axis reflects the various ages of humankind. The y -axis could contain any one of three stimulation-related exposure variables: amount, types, and variation. The nature of the relationship curve will be similar in all cases. That is, over time the amount of stimulation, the types of stimulation, and the variation in stimulation that the human race has been exposed to has increased dramatically at an exponential rate. This is an intuitive notion, and one can easily surmise that the angle of the curve has dramatically angled upward over time. This change in the angle has become most pronounced during the 20th century.

Media forms have been the key facilitator of this shifting curve dating back to Gutenberg's introduction of the printing press in 1455. This single event created an availability of information that was unprecedented at the time. In the 1800s the

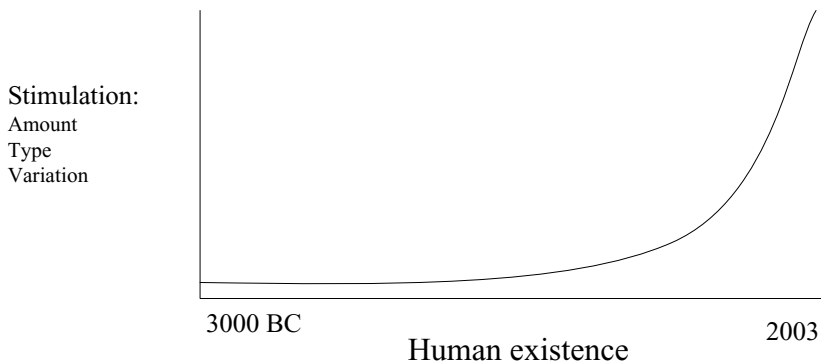


FIG. 13.2 Graduated stimulation curve.

ability to capture and reproduce pictures again increased the amount, type, and variation of stimuli to which one was exposed. In the early 1900s, the combination of radio and moving pictures (i.e., movies) created another leap forward in the mass communication of information and images. But none of the previous inventions matched the remarkable impact that resulted from the technical ability to televise, or send images over the airways. In recent times market segmentation has moved televised programming to the schools (i.e., Channel 1), airports, doctors' offices, and retail establishments, to name just a few targeted locations. To capture this upward curve in the present we must now consider the influence of computing and the Internet. Today, with multiple types of media, we are bombarded by various forms, changing formats, and increased variation of stimulation, the vast majority of which we now take for granted or tune out; one can imagine the impact that today's amount and variation of stimuli would have had on a human being 100 years ago, let alone a person living a thousand years ago or earlier.

A specific example of this graduated curve is commercial television. As commercial television made its early debut in the late 1940s, audiences for the first time were exposed on a regular basis to visually oriented, motion-based commercial messages about products. These early commercial messages were often pitched by celebrities and would typically last between 1 to 2 min, with any one image or scene lasting up to the full amount of time allotted for the commercial. For example, it was not unusual for the product to be demonstrated employing the same camera shot and angle for between 20 s and 2 min. Today, the average commercial lasts between 10 and 15 s, with single camera shots moving at an incredible pace, sometimes shifting literally each second (in some cases less than a second) of viewing.

This evolutionary change in the rate of exposure to the amount, types, and variation of stimulation has also brought about changes in how humans process this stimulation. While one might logically argue that such stimulation has increased our potential exposure to diversity, and it clearly has, the graduated curve also suggests that if we were able to process most of this stimulation, at best it would be at a very

shallow level, or subliminally, and we would likely filter most of it out very quickly. However, what is more likely is that we select (either intentionally or unintentionally) to ignore much of the stimuli that we are exposed to today (Gitlin, 2002).

Simplicity of Message

A second media-related facilitator that restricts exposure to diversity lies in the nature of the messages that are forthcoming in today's media environment. Building off of the previously discussed graduated curve of stimulation, along with the notion of reduced commercial time, comes a parallel reduction in the length and thus the depth of the message. In today's fast-paced media environment, the rule is to be extremely concise. This plays out in the commercial environment in the form of reduced product descriptions, sound bites, and catch phrases; increased use of fine print for required messages; and enhanced use of graphics to convey the message.

If one considers the print media over the past century, one is quick to note that advertising has evolved from a significant use of detailed information within any given ad to a greater reliance on graphics as a means to project the message. In the broadcast industry, this reduced wording has come as a result of the shrinking length of commercials. Today we listen to and are accustomed to hearing sound bites and catch phrases (e.g., BASF's "We don't make the products; we make them better" or United Airlines's "Fly the friendly skies"). The purpose of these concise messages is to present a proposition statement, often reflecting a relationship between the consumer and a product, or a brand and a key attribute. It is left up to the consumer to search for a deeper level of information. Although the search for more detail becomes the responsibility of the consumer, whether such search is undertaken depends on many factors. As a condition to elaborative message processing, Petty and Cacioppo (1981, 1986) in their elaboration likelihood model ask whether a person is motivated to or able to process the message. These questions are especially applicable here. Does the consumer have time to search? Will this search activity require a sacrifice in time and energy and draw attention away from other desired (leisure) or necessary (work) activities? Does the consumer have access to the more detailed information? Is the need for more information viewed as important? Is the consumer able to process detailed and complex information? In today's fast-paced world where sound bites are prominent in the media environment, the question arises as to the degree to which the consumer is reinforced to seek more detailed information. Does this reduced message strategy cause the consumer to seek more information? This is an empirical question, the answer to which will require future research. However, the hypothesis offered here is that such reduction in message length and depth creates an environment where exposure to diverse information is constrained and a person's existing beliefs as well as one's existing stereotypes persist.

Because of the increased governmental regulation of certain industries, there appears to be an enhanced use of fine print in advertising. More than not, this

fine print may be required, as in the case of pharmaceutical advertising, but it is also used to downplay certain negative product attributes (e.g., pricing in the high-end automobile market). Fine print, in and of itself, discourages further reading. Because of its inhibiting and complex nature, many consumers miss significant information, some of which might not have been considered in the past. Thus the consumer's knowledge base is restricted due to inhibited exposure.

It could be argued that a greater awareness of Freud's (1924/1969) teachings regarding relationships, dreams, and subconscious images, combined with Watson's application of behaviorism to advertising strategies on Madison Avenue (Buckley, 1989), were catalysts to a revolutionary change in promotional tactics. Advertising strategy, once loaded down with verbiage, evolved in the 1930s and 1940s to a greater dependence on images as a means to convey and reinforce message content. These images depicted people using products in different settings. The images reinforced certain attributes and how products could be used to produce beneficial (or, in the case of public service announcements, negative) outcomes. The pairing of product and celebrity became a norm. Before the dangers of tobacco were known and publicized, professional athletes and medical personnel were used to promote the product.

Images have the unique property of forcing the viewer to generate descriptions, often accessing existing memory to do so. During the period of mass marketing that was created after the end of World War II and with the advent of television, audiences were exposed to many diverse images. However, as marketing has evolved and market segmentation has become a sophisticated science, today's images are targeted, and, as noted previously, these images are often reflections of our unique lifestyle and needs. It is posited here that the act of targeting images to certain segments, by its very nature, restricts exposure to diverse images that are unfamiliar to the viewer.

Stereotype Reinforcement

Continued use of stereotyping in programming and commercials restricts exposure to other dimensions of a person or object. There is a wealth of research that has considered stereotyping employed in advertising. In reviewing the literature on the topic, I found that most of these stereotypes reflect four categories: age group, ethnicity, gender, and level of attractiveness. Within each category, studies generally addressed the nature of an individual's role (e.g., Bristor, Lee, & Hunt, 1995; Cheng, 1997; Elliot, 1995; Gilens, 1996; Signorielli, McLeod, & Healy, 1994), behavior (Hansen & Osborne, 1995; Power, Murphy, & Coover, 1996), perceptions and beliefs (Ford & LaTour, 1996; Strutton & Lumpkin, 1993), product association (Allan & Coltrane, 1996; Downs & Harrison, 1985; Mazis, Ringold, Perry, & Denman, 1992; Taylor & Lee, 1994), and the environmental setting (Culley & Bennett, 1976; Swayne & Greco, 1987). For example, Taylor and his colleagues (Taylor & Lee, 1994; Taylor, Lee, & Stern, 1995; Taylor & Stern, 1997) conducted

a thorough examination of the depicted roles that Asians play within advertising. They found that Asian models appeared more frequently in the popular business press and science publications (vs. women's or general interest magazines), were more likely to be associated with technology-based products (vs. nontechnology-based products), appeared in ads more often in business contexts, were depicted more typically as co-workers, and were seldom seen in ads containing family or social settings.

Use of stereotyped images and messages in the media has the potential to serve as a reinforcing agent, encouraging continued individual stereotypes among the audience. In maintaining the stereotype, other characteristics of a person or object may be omitted or only partially presented. This is especially true in print advertising, where only one image is presented. If that image reinforces a stereotype, it is not likely introducing other nonstereotype or counterstereotype information. Thus, the exposure to stereotypes in the media environment may preclude the opportunity to learn new things about dissimilar people and objects.

Value Reinforcement

Segmented media programming is purposely targeted to capture subsets of the viewing population. ESPN targets the male sports fan, BET targets the African American viewer, MTV targets the adolescent audience, PBS targets the highly educated, HGTV targets the upscale female population, and so on. Likewise, women's magazines target females in different age groups, *Sports Illustrated* targets men (with attempts to target females and children through *SI for Women*, *SI for Kids*), *Savoy* and *Ebony* target African American readers, and so on. There are special interest magazines for the science oriented (*Scientific American*, *Science*, *Popular Science*), for the endurance athlete (*Runner's World*, *Triathlete*), for the automobile enthusiast (*Car and Driver*, *Hot Rod*), and for the computer jock (*PC World*, *Wired*). Each of these media outlets may reflect different, or in some cases overlapping, market segments (e.g., Morris 2002). A market segment can be defined in terms of the uniqueness of its held values and the specific value it seeks. Segmented programming and focused periodicals do their best to reinforce these group value systems while minimizing or eliminating exposure to the values of other groups.

It has also been argued that value reinforcement may come from media-driven agendas. For example, in countries where the mass communication enterprise is in the direct hands of the state, monopolistic control over the media is reflected in official censorship and the promotion of the goals of the state. On the other hand, for non-state-controlled media (which includes a large percentage of Western civilization), a debate rages between political liberals and conservatives regarding the projected bias in the news. Some argue the bias reflects the large media conglomerates' control and profit motive (see Chomsky, 2002; Herman & Chomsky, 2002), whereas some argue that the bias is due to either a liberal orientation (see Baker, 1994; Goldberg, 2002) or a conservative orientation as reflected in radio

and television talk shows (e.g., *Russ Limbaugh*, *The O'Reilly Factor*). Regardless of the position one takes, there is increasing evidence that media reporting of the news and media programming is highly value laden, resulting in specific selection of images and news based on targeted audience requirements.

News As Biased Entertainment

Building on the conclusion offered in the last section, several media scientists have noted that today's news has moved away from objectivity toward a biased form of entertainment based on audience segmentation (for a review of studies supporting this point, see MacGregor, 1997). A visit to any online bookstore search engine will reveal a significant number of recent books questioning the topic of biased news reporting, some from whistle-blowers from within the industry. This potential bias can perhaps be attributed the media's facilitation of desired motivational states, which are reinforced through varied types of programming (Gitlin, 2001). Today's presentation of the news contains programming and messages that are believed to be of interest to the identified viewer of a single specific news program. The NBC national news format is in fact different from FOX, which in turn is different from the presentation one would get from CNN or the BBC. Coverage of international stories varies greatly between *Newsweek* or *Time*, and the *Economist*.

These differences are based in part on the nature of the audience who selects these news outlets, how the audience wants news presented, and the types of stories the audience wants to hear (MacGregor, 1997). To retain the audience, news must be presented in a fashion that plays to what the audience wants and needs. One only has to return to the murder trial of O. J. Simpson to study the way a news story attracts an audience. During that time, because of early recognition by the media that continuance of such a story would guarantee high ratings/readership, a great deal of other news, perhaps judged by the news agency as not as controversial or attractive, was never aired. The trial was a major media event, reported by more than 1,000 journalists reporting via 121 video paths, including 14 satellite uplinks, 80 miles of sound and vision cable, and 650 phone lines ("*That Simpson Trial in Full*," 1995). The murder, the trial, and the reporting and news discussion that continued afterwards took well over a year. There have been other trials involving celebrities, so why did this one attract such a large audiences? What was the makeup of the audience? These questions are intriguing, and further understanding of audience attractiveness to this new way of promoting a continuing news story over time deserves further empirical examination.

News stories involve presented images (often highly graphic) and carefully crafted writing. In many cases, the collection of images and writing is not well grounded because studies of reporting behavior suggest shortcuts and biased information searches (reviewed in MacGregor, 1997). Images and words are brought together by media professionals in an attempt to convey a story. Each story has a plot that is written in such a way as to keep the audience interested. Thus, the

news focuses on stories the news media believe their target audience wants to be exposed to and omits what they subjectively believe their viewers do not want to see or hear. To the point, decisions are made that impact the degree to which the audience is exposed to diverse points of view.

One further point needs to be made. Gitlin (2002) provided anecdotal evidence that the media audience tends to accept as truth whatever is printed and broadcasted. In a news environment that includes talk show opinion, we need to examine how well the audience discriminates between objective-based and subjective-based “truths”? We have been conditioned to view the media as objective, yet there is much evidence to suggest what is reported is often flawed because news reporting plays to what the audience wants to hear or see (MacGregor, 1997).

Desensitization of Media and Message, One-Sidedness, and Demographic Restriction

Today’s commercial and media environments are arguably very cluttered. Consumers are exposed to thousands of product images and verbiage daily. In addition, media forms carrying the images and verbiage are exploding. The traditional sources of print and broadcasting are rapidly expanding. Transportation advertising still appears in trains, buses, taxicabs, subways, and so forth but now also appears as we drive the highways, such as on large moving billboards that take the form of 18-wheelers. The location of televised programming has expanded from the home to doctor’s offices, grocery stores, airports, and even in our schools. With the advent of the Internet it is possible to transmit commercial messages online to our computers, our PDAs (personal digital assistant), and even to our connected cell phones. Internet sites, now numbering in the hundreds of millions, have the opportunity to promote and persuade. Promotional signage of all types (e.g., billboards, grocery store aisles, shopping carts) continues to be ever present in our travel and shopping environments. Direct marketing invades our privacy at home with cold calling, targeted mailers, and samples that come through the mail. This is a constant bombardment, as Gitlin (2001) terms it, a media torrent. The consumer can’t possibly process all the messages they are exposed to. Traditional folklore suggests that out of the thousands of commercial messages one is exposed to daily, only a dozen or so break through to the attention level. This suggests that although messages and media forms may be novel initially, with significant levels of repetition, we become desensitized to them over time (e.g., Schumann et al., 1991). This desensitization suggests that a significant number of messages are never processed.

On top of a clutter environment exists a one-sidedness in the promotion of culture through mass communication sources. One only has to visit abroad to see the contrast in media distribution. American television shows are popular throughout the world. American products are promoted in every culture. American television influences what is broadcast globally. Right or wrong, other populations compare their culture with the culture of the United States.

Finally, within the United States, ethnic-based television has taken hold in the larger markets, but many cities have restricted cultural programming. For example, in the mid-size cities in the Southeast, it is still the case that there are no basic Hispanic or Asian television or radio stations. Yet on the West Coast they are plentiful. This targeted media strategy has an important consequence. Individuals who live in the Southeast are rarely exposed to the Hispanic or Asian cultures via the media. The only program from abroad that receives geographically wide exposure in this country is arguably Great Britain's BBC News. While we receive the world's news from CNN's global broadcasting offices, unless it is a strategic move to focus on a single event, the audience sees only short clips of the global news at best. In sum, the growth of media clutter, one-sided promotion of culture, and restricted demographic-based exposure all contribute to a limiting of exposure to diverse cultures and diverse points of view.

CONCLUSION

Media segmentation (as does market segmentation) focuses on the individual or the in-group. The presentation of messages and illustrations typically reflects an in-group member's own lifestyle and values. The commercial environment presents a "me" as owning certain products, doing certain activities, having certain values, socializing with certain people. But it also infers a "they" as being different in their choice of products, activities, and friends (Turow, 1997). We target products based on ethnic groups, age groups, and gender, and, even within these large demographic groups, we find segregation. For example, a visit to an American public high school will reveal that today's teenagers reinforce a segregation of groups through their informal but obvious group dress codes. Thus, it could be argued that media factors and market segmentation strategies reinforce social segregation.

There are a number of interesting research questions that fall out of this question regarding the degree to which individuals restrict their exposure to diversity. One could identify how and when targeted media programming and commercials reinforce self-identity. How do targeted media programming and associated advertising influence in-group and out-group perceptions? How do stereotypes employed in media programming and commercial communication form and reinforce out-group perceptions and personal stereotyping? With children? To what extent do we tend to focus our share of controlled exposure to messages via interactive media in ways that reinforce our self-identity and restrict exposure to out-group information? What inaccuracies and attribution errors occur as a result of restricted exposure and stereotyping? Extending this inquiry to include elements of market segmentation, one could ask whether market segmentation results in significantly less exposure to other groups in our society. Does market segmentation serve to enhance insecurity or fear toward out-groups? What impact do market segmentation strategies have on the formation or reinforcement of prejudicial attitudes

toward out-groups? How do market segmentation strategies alter our cognitive schemas? What are the long-term costs of market segmentation on society?

This chapter has sought to present the phenomenon of restricting exposure to diversity. As such, several media factors were discussed that are thought to contribute to the phenomenon. It is hoped that this discussion will lead to further empirical investigation of the phenomenon.

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**III. INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES IN MEDIA
USAGE AND THEIR ROLE AS MEDIATORS AND
MODERATORS OF MEDIA EFFECTS**

The Need for Entertainment Scale

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What I am claiming here is not that television is entertaining but that it has made entertainment itself the natural format for the representation of all experience.

(Postman, 1986, p. 87)

Measuring individual differences in social-psychological variables has proved fruitful in consumer psychology. Well-known measures assess cognitive styles and motivations toward having various types of personal and social experiences. For example, the past 20 years of research have produced the development of scales measuring self-monitoring (Snyder, 1987), the need for cognition (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982), dispositional transportation into stories (Green & Brock, 2000; Green, Garst, & Brock, this volume), and the need for affect (Maio & Esses, 2001). Such individual-difference measures have served moderating functions that facilitate explanation in a variety of domains in persuasion and interpersonal relationships.

A heretofore neglected factor may be individuals' need for entertainment (NEnt). Postman's (1986) claim assumed, without proof, that the trend to present "all subject matter as entertaining" (p. 87) stemmed from individual recipients' changed manner of processing information (p. 107). In dissent from Postman's broad psychological transformation assumption, we propose instead that people likely differ in their habitual seeking of experiences and consumption of products from which they derive entertainment. If such differences could be identified and

scaled, their role in moderating consumers' experience of media could be fruitfully explored. The benefit to consumer behavior theory is reflected in the impetus for the current volume: Entertainment media have increasingly become venues that foster the persuasiveness of public narratives (Green & Brock, 2000; Green, Garst, & Brock, this volume). If people do indeed differ in their drive toward entertainment media, then arguably those who seek out entertainment more frequently may be more susceptible to the public narratives that often comprise media persuasion. Message acceptance processes may be facilitated by NEnt: The couching of a persuasive message within a fictional narrative (e.g., Prentice, Gerrig, & Bailis, 1997; Wheeler, Green, & Brock, 1999) could have a differential impact depending on the magnitude of the recipients' disposition to seek out and consume entertainment. NEnt may not only moderate the impact of messages in entertainment contexts but also lead to addiction-like dependency, and it could impede the primary purpose of other societal functions, such as education.

ENTERTAINMENT INTO ADDICTION

In a *Scientific American* article about the stylistic tricks of television, Kubey and Csikszentmihalyi (2002) showed how TV functions physiologically like a habit-forming drug and includes severe withdrawal symptoms: "Families have volunteered or been paid to stop viewing, typically for a week or a month. Many could not complete the period of abstinence. Some fought, verbally and physically. . . . When the TV habit interferes with the ability to grow, to learn new things, to lead an active life, then it does constitute a kind of dependence" (p. 80). We propose that people who are high in NEnt may be more susceptible to the addictive enslavement of passive forms of entertainment, such as TV.

SITUATIONAL PRESS FOR ENTERTAINMENT: CLASSROOM EXAMPLE

More generally, we propose that any situation in which people feel themselves to be members (perhaps a sole member) of a relatively passive audience is a situation in which NEnt can be evoked. Such situations are not limited to official entertainment (TV, movies, sports spectacles) but would also include school, church, and airport waiting lounges: "How television stages the world becomes the model for how the world is properly to be staged. It is not merely that on the television screen entertainment is the metaphor for all discourse, it is that off the screen (in classrooms) the same metaphor prevails" (Postman, 1986, p. 92). People high in NEnt may carry that need and express that need in all realms of their lives (school, church, etc.). An interesting testable implication is that NEnt could moderate the evaluation of teachers and instructors. Given that most instructors do not perform as well as

professional entertainers, their evaluations may be misleadingly reduced by students for whom NEnt is high in the classroom and other audience-type situations.

MEDIA THEORIES AND NEED FOR ENTERTAINMENT

That people may differ in their NEnt and that these differences may drive recourse to entertainment modalities is entirely consistent with leading media theories, such as uses and gratification (Rubin, 1994, 2002), cultivation (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, & Signorielli, 1986; Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & Shanahan, 2002), agenda setting (McCombs & Shaw, 1972), knowledge gap (Tichenour, Donohue, & Olien, 1970), and diffusion of innovation (Rogers, 1995). Unfortunately, a survey of the literature (e.g., Bryant & Zillmann, 2002; Rubin, 1994, 2002; Zillmann & Bryant, 1994; Zillmann & Vorderer, 2000) did not yield a global measure of entertainment need (for a review, see Oliver, 2002); it did not provide a measure that featured relatively passive receipt of entertainment stimuli (e.g., cinema, books, television, theater) in contrast with active recreational pursuits (e.g., sailing, snowmobiling, playing tennis). Of course, one challenge inherent in studying entertainment motivation is definitional. As noted by Zillmann and Bryant (1994), entertainment, in its broadest sense, could be defined as any situation or activity from which a person derives pleasure. Such a definition could include anything from watching a film to playing sports to spending time with loved ones.

We decided to limit the scope of our studies to experiences in which recipients receive exogenous stimuli in a largely passive way (e.g., TV, radio, film, print, theater, and sport spectacles). Fortunately, for our purposes, these kinds of media are among the most amenable to direct study by consumer psychologists. We expected that the bulk of our respondents would primarily define entertainment in terms of largely passive modalities, even without being prompted to do so.¹

ENTERTAINMENT: SOVEREIGN INDUSTRY, SOVEREIGN NEED

In *The Entertainment Economy*, Wolf (1999) coined the term *entertainmentization* to convey that entertainment is the largest and fastest growing industry (see also Zillmann & Vorderer, 2000) and that the bulk of commercial ventures, to succeed,

¹ Although TV is provided for the recipient—so the recipient is completely passive—actual use may entail somewhat energetic activity. According to Wolf (1999), “The inertia of the TV viewer in the days of programming scarcity has been replaced by the hyperactivity of the TV users in these days of programming glut. A viewer watches what is offered, a user chooses to watch or not to watch. A *Los Angeles Times* poll showed that 40 percent of male viewers zapped commercials as soon as they came on. It’s a well-known joke in broadcasting that ‘Men don’t want to know what’s on television, they want to know what else is on!’” (p. 255).

must entertain along with their other functions:

Modern mass media—that is, television—were born with the baby-boom generation. From its first formative years, the evolution of media impacted the development of this generation and was in turn influenced by the wants and desires of this new economic colossus—a whole generation of consumers who were socialized by what they saw on the tube. A common consumer culture leapfrogged national and cultural boundaries and then, as boomers had children and now grandchildren, the process has, if anything, been accelerated. When the game console and the computer screen are added to the TV screen, together with all the implications of the Internet, I see an endless appetite for entertainment content: something to connect us emotionally with products, something to provide us with information in a stimulating way. The bottom line is that *we have come to expect that we will be entertained all the time*. . . . Products and brands that deliver on this expectation succeed. Products that do not will disappear. Entertainment has become the unifying force of modern commerce, as pervasive as currency. (p. 72; emphasis added)

HOW STRONG AND UBIQUITOUS IS THE NEED FOR ENTERTAINMENT?

Prior to developing a Need for Entertainment scale, we surveyed 115 undergraduates from Ohio State University and Georgia Southern University with a question about the role of TV in their lives (Mazzocco, Brock, & Brock, 2003). We prefaced the focal TV question with a warm-up question, as follows:

Imagine that, although actually a citizen of Pennsylvania [South Carolina], you have always been considered a citizen of Ohio [Georgia] and that a new Pennsylvania [South Carolina] program offers a one-time tax-free “bounty from surplus” to persons who can prove they are Pennsylvanians [South Carolinians]. As you can easily provide such proof, you are considering applying for the Pennsylvania [South Carolina] gift if it is sufficiently generous. What amount of cash would you require to continue your life, publicly (and correctly) identified as a Pennsylvanian [South Carolinian]?

(write in amount in dollars)

The top of Fig. 14.1 shows a histogram with the raw results. Respondents perceived more than negligible inconvenience in correcting their state citizenship to get the cash gift: Only 13 people were willing to change for no money at all. Yet more than half of the respondents were willing to switch back from their current citizenship state to their true citizenship state for less than \$10,000.

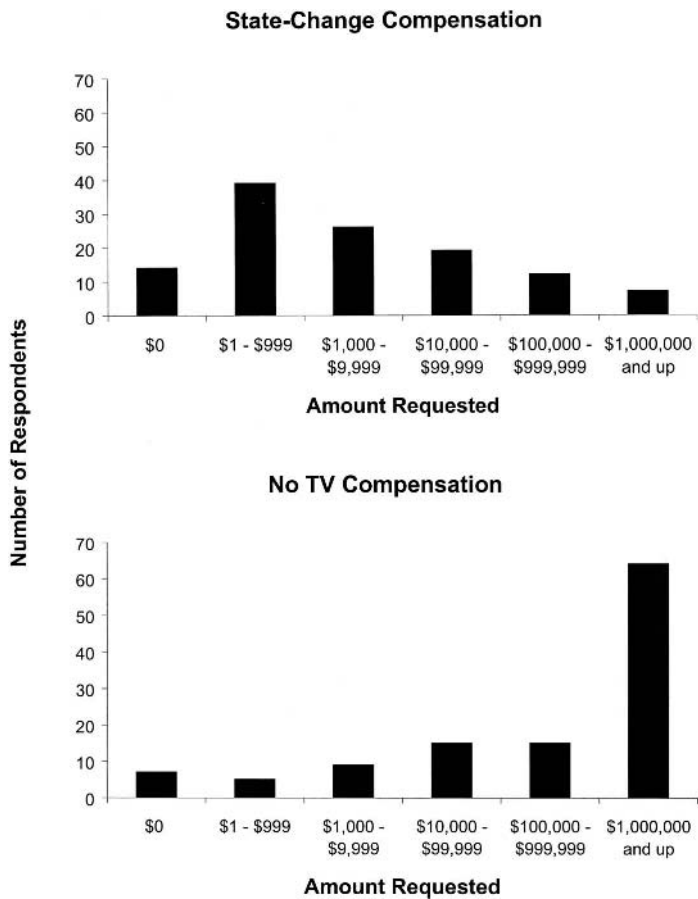


FIG. 14.1 Money requested as compensation to change statehood (top) and to forego television (bottom).

Respondents next answered a similarly worded question, with the focus now placed on the cessation of TV viewing:

Imagine that there is a tiny invisible sensor (worn on an earring or watchband), which reliably detects TV watching by the wearer and which reliably tracks the wearer’s normal daily movement. If the wearer watches TV or if the sensor is any way tampered with, a control station with global transponding is notified. What amount of cash would you require to cease watching TV for the rest of your life? (If you “cheated”—by watching TV—the entire cash sum, plus compounded interest, would be legally seizable from you and all your assets).

(write in amount in dollars)

TABLE 14.1
Initial Need for Entertainment Questionnaire

For each of the statements below, please indicate whether or not the statement is characteristic of you or of what you believe. If the statement is extremely uncharacteristic of you or what you believe (*not at all like you*), please place a "1" on the line to the left of the statement. If the statement is extremely characteristic of you or of what you believe (*very much like you*), please place a "5" on the line to the left of the statement. You should use the following scale as you rate the statements below.

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Extremely unlike me</i>	<i>Somewhat unlike me</i>	<i>Uncertain</i>	<i>Somewhat like me</i>	<i>Extremely like me</i>

Answer all questions as accurately as you can, but please remember that there are no right or wrong answers. We are interested in your perceptions.

1. ____ When traveling, I get very bored unless there is something entertaining to do.
2. ____ I tend to use computers for work much more than for games. (R)
3. ____ I am very selective about how I spend my free time. (R)
4. ____ Because they entertain millions of people, professional athletes are paid fair wages for their performances.
5. ____ Watching television for an extended period of time makes me restless. (R)
6. ____ Previews of upcoming movies and television programs generally make me very interested in seeing these shows.
7. ____ When reading a newspaper, I tend to look at the comics before anything else.
8. ____ **Entertainment is the most enjoyable part of life.**
9. ____ **I tend not to seek out new ways to be entertained.** (R)
10. ____ **I spend a lot of money on entertainment expenses.**
11. ____ I prefer to "make my own fun," rather than be entertained by others. (R)
12. ____ **I do not spend much time during the week on entertaining activities.** (R)
13. ____ **It is a waste of tax money to fund entertainment programs.** (R)
14. ____ I hardly ever check my watch when I am at a performance.
15. ____ When Friday approaches, I find that I often think about how I will spend my leisure time.
16. ____ I find it much easier to learn things when they are taught in an entertaining way.
17. ____ Watching television is a poor use of free time. (R)
18. ____ As far as my choice of entertainment is concerned, anything will do.
19. ____ Entertainers play an important role in our society.
20. ____ If I don't get to engage in the sort of entertaining activities that I prefer, then I tend to feel uncomfortable.
21. ____ It is human nature to need entertainment.
22. ____ I prefer work-related activities to entertaining activities. (R)
23. ____ **I enjoy being entertained more than my friends do.**
24. ____ Cultures that emphasize work responsibilities to the exclusion of entertainment are unhealthy.
25. ____ I prefer to read magazines such as *People* or *Entertainment Weekly*.
26. ____ **I need some entertainment time each and every day.**
27. ____ Laugh tracks foster enjoyment of television comedy programs.
28. ____ I prefer being entertained, instead of having to entertain myself.
29. ____ I would rather read a fictional story than something related to work or school.
30. ____ **My idea of entertainment is a situation where everything is done for me.**
31. ____ I feel really guilty when I put off work in order to do something entertaining. (R)
32. ____ **I prefer to be entertained in ways that don't require any effort on my part.**
33. ____ I find that I like most movies.
34. ____ **Entertainment is an unnecessary luxury.** (R)

(continued)

TABLE 14.1

(continued)

-
35. ____ **I feel like my time spent on entertainment purposes is generally wasted.** (R)
 36. ____ Exciting rides are the best thing about amusement parks.
 37. ____ **If I don't have enough fun in the evening, I find it hard to function properly the next day.**
 38. ____ I become easily bored on long trips.
 39. ____ **I think life should be spent being entertained.**
 40. ____ **I spend most of my free time seeking out entertainment.**
 41. ____ I do not find satisfaction after being entertained for many hours in a row. (R)
 42. ____ Entertainment is an example of a need that is usually fulfilled without genuine satisfaction.
 (R)
 43. ____ **Very little of my money is spent on entertainment.** (R)
 44. ____ **I am always on the lookout for new forms of entertainment.**
 45. ____ **I like to take an active role in my entertainment activities.** (R)
 46. ____ **Entertainment is something you do when you're too lazy to do anything else.** (R)
 47. ____ I find parades to be boring. (R)
 48. ____ I like being part of a crowd of spectators.
 49. ____ **I could be described as an "entertainment-oholic."**
 50. ____ The government would be better off encouraging people to be more productive instead of
 always seeking out entertainment. (R)
 51. ____ I like to watch tropical fish swim in tanks.
-

Note. Boldface items comprise the reduced (19-item) Need for Entertainment questionnaire. (R) denotes reverse-coded items.

The bottom of Fig. 14.1 shows the results from this question. Evidently, respondents were not very willing to forego TV. Only eight people said they were willing to stop watching TV for no money at all. Indeed, for more than half of the respondents a fortune in compensation, at least one million dollars, was required. In fact, the mean amount requested to forego TV, admittedly distorted by several outliers, was 23 billion dollars. The conclusion appears inescapable that, to the extent that TV viewing is correlated with the need for entertainment, NEnt may be an extremely powerful force in many people.

STUDY 1 AND STUDY 2: SCALE DEVELOPMENT AND FACTOR STRUCTURE

We initially generated dozens of potential scale items. Discarding those items that seemed double-barreled or that lacked apparent face validity, we were left with a total of 51 items. Participants were asked to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, the extent to which the items were characteristic of themselves (see Table 14.1). When assembling the scale, we tried to construct subsets of items that addressed various underlying themes of interest, such as entertainment drive, entertainment utility, and entertainment passivity.

Among problematic issues was selectivity in choices of entertainment. If we presumed that individual differences in NEnt indeed exist, would people high in this need be particularly selective about the types of entertainment they seek? Put another way, would high NEnt motivate drive reduction such that individuals indiscriminately consumed whatever products are available (i.e., akin to eating whatever is immediately available if one is particularly hungry), or would it instead be associated with discriminating tastes in entertainment (i.e., such that qualities of specific entertainments are key to fulfilling the need). We therefore included items (with occasional reverse scoring) that addressed such issues (e.g., "If I don't have enough fun in the evening, I find it hard to function properly the next day").

We were also interested in whether NEnt might be reflected in reports of experience. Items that attempted to address experience included those that concerned entertainment consumption (e.g., "I spend a lot of money on entertainment expenses" and "When reading a newspaper, I tend to look at the comics before anything else"). Items such as "Entertainment is an unnecessary luxury" and "It is a waste of tax money to fund entertainment programs" assessed evaluative disposition toward entertainment.

SAMPLES, PROCEDURES, AND ADDITIONAL INSTRUMENTS

We employed two large samples. The first sample consisted of 389 Ohio State University undergraduates who filled out questionnaires at the beginning of an academic quarter as part of a mass prescreening procedure. These 389 participants also completed the Need for Cognition scale (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982).

The second sample consisted of 282 Ohio State University undergraduate participants in a large laboratory experiment in which the principal task was to react to the reading of texts, presented in either narrative and rhetorical formats and, within each format, in strong or weak versions. The participants in the second sample also completed the Need for Cognition scale (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982), a measure of dispositional transportation (Green & Brock, 2000; Green, Garst, & Brock, this volume), the Vividness of Visual Imagery Scales (Babin & Burns, 1998), and the Tellegen Absorption Index (Tellegen, 1982). Thus, the contexts and tasks of the participants in each sample were quite different.

Analytical Approach: Factor Analyses

We conducted a factor analysis of the first sample and then observed whether the emerging factor structure replicated in the second sample. We investigated the consistency and reliability of the emerging 19-item reduced NEnt scale and its degree of association with the other measured variables.

Factor analyses were conducted using maximum likelihood extraction, with quartimax rotation, a type of rotation that assumes orthogonality. From the total

administration of 51 items, initial analyses attempted to extract 12 factors and were then followed by analyses with successively smaller numbers of factors. Items that did not load at above .20 on a single factor were deleted and the factor solution was rerun. This procedure was followed until 19 items were left that loaded well and differentially on three factors.

Entertainment Drive: Factor 1. The first factor consisted of 12 items with substantial loadings that reflected a drive toward or motivation toward entertainment (see Table 14.2). The items did not load notably on Factors 2 and 3. Importantly,

TABLE 14.2
Factor 1 (Drive for Entertainment) Loadings on Need for Entertainment
in Studies 1 and 2

<i>Item</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>		<i>Factor 2</i>		<i>Factor 3</i>	
	<i>Study 1^a</i>	<i>Study 2^b</i>	<i>Study 1^a</i>	<i>Study 2^b</i>	<i>Study 1^a</i>	<i>Study 2^b</i>
Entertainment is the most enjoyable part of life.	0.57	0.50	0.10	0.14	0.16	0.22
I tend not to seek out new ways to be entertained. (R)	0.25	0.19	0.19	0.18	−0.10	−0.25
I spend a lot of money on entertainment expenses. [M > F]	0.54	0.62	0.17	0.06	0.07	−0.04
I do not spend much time during the week on entertaining activities. (R)	0.44	0.38	0.25	0.25	0.10	−0.19
I enjoy being entertained more than my friends do.	0.48	0.38	0.04	−0.03	0.09	0.13
I need some entertainment time each and every day. [M > F]	0.53	0.40	0.24	0.37	−0.02	0.08
If I don't have enough fun in the evening, I find it hard to function properly the next day. [M > F]	0.38	0.38	−0.11	−0.21	0.10	0.06
I think life should be spent being entertained.	0.67	0.55	0.00	0.03	0.22	0.24
I spend most of my free time seeking out entertainment.	0.75	0.71	−0.01	−0.08	0.03	0.08
Very little of my money is spent on entertainment. (R)	0.51	0.54	0.24	0.11	0.08	−0.21
I am always on the lookout for new forms of entertainment.	0.54	0.42	0.16	0.12	−0.20	−0.27
I could be described as an "entertainment-oholic."	0.72	0.66	0.04	−0.07	0.04	0.15
Items loading highest on factor	12	11	0	0	0	1

Note. Boldfacing indicates highest factor loading of an item.

^a *N* = 389.

^b *N* = 282.

factor loadings generally replicated, for 11 of the 12 items, on the drive factor in the second sample. Factor 1 items included "Entertainment is the most enjoyable part of life"; "I tend not to seek out new ways to be entertained" (reverse scored); "I spend a lot of money on entertainment expenses"; "I enjoy being entertained more than my friends do"; and "I could be described as an 'entertainment-oholic'." Although one of these items, "I tend not to seek out new ways to be entertained" (reverse scored), did not replicate its loading on Factor 1 in the second sample, we decided to retain it in the emergent 19-item scale. In our opinion, the item both fundamentally reflects the nature of the drive factor and happens to be useful in determining response biases (e.g., acquiescent responses) because it is the functional opposite of another item, "I am always on the lookout for new forms of entertainment," that loaded well and reliably on Factor 1 across both samples.

As indicated in Table 14.2 males had reliably higher mean scores than females for three Factor 1 items: spending money on entertainment, daily need for entertainment, and inability to function without entertainment. These mean gender differences replicated across the two samples.

Entertainment Utility: Factor 2. The second factor consisted of four items with substantial loadings that seemingly reflected attitudes toward the general utility of entertainment. (See Table 14.3.) Importantly, factor loadings generally

TABLE 14.3
Factor 2 (Utility of Entertainment) Loadings on Need for Entertainment
in Studies 1 and 2

Item	Factor 1		Factor 2		Factor 3	
	Study 1 ^a	Study 2 ^b	Study 1 ^a	Study 2 ^b	Study 1 ^a	Study 2 ^b
It is a waste of tax money to fund entertainment programs. (R)	0.19	0.18	0.37	0.28	0.10	-0.18
Entertainment is an unnecessary luxury. (R)	0.28	0.05	0.64	0.67	-0.02	-0.17
I feel like my time spent on entertainment purposes is generally wasted. (R)	0.25	-0.01	0.64	0.61	-0.08	-0.11
Entertainment is something you do when you're too lazy to do anything else. (R)	0.13	0.05	0.55	0.38	-0.16	-0.26
Items loading highest on factor	0	0	4	4	0	0

Note. Boldfacing indicates highest factor loading of an item.

^a N = 389.

^b N = 282.

replicated, for each of the four items, on the utility factor in the second sample. Attitudes toward the utility of entertainment were reflected in items such as “It is a waste of tax money to fund entertainment programs” (reverse scored) and “Entertainment is an unnecessary luxury” (reverse scored).

Entertainment Passivity: Factor 3. The third factor consisted of three items with substantial loadings that reflected preference for passivity in entertainment. (See Table 14.4, Columns 7 and 8.) Importantly, factor loadings replicated on the passivity factor in the second sample. Factor 3 items included “My idea of entertainment is a situation where everything is done for me” and “I like to take an active role in my entertainment activities” (reverse scored).

Correlational Evidence and Scale Parameters

Factor 1 (Drive) was moderately positively associated with Factor 2 (Utility) in both samples—the reliable correlations were .39 and .17. However, Factor 1 had near zero association with Factor 3 (Passivity) in both samples. Factors 2 and 3 were reliably inversely associated in both samples: $-.12$ and $-.33$.

Table 14.5 shows that, for Studies 1 and 2, substantial Cronbach alphas, in the .7 to .8 range, were obtained in both samples for the entire scale and for the Factor 1 subscale. The mean scores were just above the middle of the 5-point scale. Correlational evidence showed that NEnt was reliably inversely related to Need for Cognition, an outcome that supported our passive bias in defining NEnt and in generating initial items. In particular, the strongest inverse correlations with Need for Cognition occurred for the third factor (Passivity). Finally, NEnt was only weakly associated with dispositional transportation and not at all with imagery propensity or absorption.

Discussion

Need for Entertainment appeared to have a sensible and replicating factor structure with satisfactory reliabilities for the overall scale and at least the largest (12-item) subscale. Importantly, in both large samples, NEnt was inversely associated with Need for Cognition, a measure of how much a person enjoys active problem solving and active critical thinking. These inverse correlations were particularly strong for the third factor (passivity) and therefore were consistent with our anticipated passive bias in the meaning to respondents of entertainment. Finally, NEnt appears to occupy a distinctive niche in that it was only weakly associated with dispositional transportation and not at all with imagery propensity or absorption (see Table 14.6). In the next studies, we further examined the passive assumption by measuring respondent’s self-definition of entertainment (Study 3) and by assessing the impact of an investigator-provided definition of entertainment (Study 4).

TABLE 14.4
Factor 3 (Passivity of Entertainment) Loadings on Need for Entertainment in Study 1 Through Study 3

<i>Item</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>			<i>Factor 2</i>			<i>Factor 3</i>		
	<i>Study 1^a</i>	<i>Study 2^b</i>	<i>Study 3^c</i>	<i>Study 1^a</i>	<i>Study 2^b</i>	<i>Study 3^c</i>	<i>Study 1^a</i>	<i>Study 2^b</i>	<i>Study 3^c</i>
My idea of entertainment is a situation where everything is done for me.	0.20	0.22	0.21	−0.06	−0.25	−0.06	0.78	0.64	0.67
I prefer to be entertained in ways that don't require any effort on my part.	0.13	0.15	−0.01	−0.02	−0.06	−0.01	0.71	0.64	0.81
I like to take an active role in my entertainment activities. (R)	0.34	0.26	−0.52	0.14	0.13	−0.13	0.39	0.35	0.60
Items loading highest on factor	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	3	3

Note. Boldfacing indicates highest factor loading of an item.

^a *N* = 389.

^b *N* = 282.

^c *N* = 60.

TABLE 14.5
Need for Entertainment Means, Reliabilities, and
Associations With Other Variables: Study 1

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	<i>NC</i> ^a
Entire scale (19 items)	3.15	.51	.81	-.24**
Drive (12 items)	3.11	.66	.83	-.19**
Utility (4 items)	3.93	.72	.68	-.01
Passivity (3 items)	2.31	.74	.62	-.34**

Note. The last column contains values of *r*.
^aNC = Need for Cognition; see text.
** *p* < .01, two-tailed.

TABLE 14.6
Need for Entertainment Means, Reliabilities, and Associations With Other
Variables: Study 2

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	α	<i>NC</i> ^a	<i>Imagery</i> ^b	<i>Transportation</i> ^c	<i>Absorption</i> ^d
Entire Scale (19 items)	3.19	.44	.72	-.22**	.03	-.17**	.01
Drive (12 items)	3.18	.61	.83	-.19**	.00	-.15*	.02
Utility (4 items)	3.84	.73	.68	.09	.02	-.04	.08
Passivity (3 items)	2.34	.73	.62	-.33**	.02	-.12	-.13*

Note. The last four columns contain values of *r*.
^aNC = Need for Cognition.
^bImagery = Vividness of Visual Imagery Scale.
^cTransportation = Dispositional Transportation.
^dAbsorption = Tellegen Absorption Index. See text.
* *p* < .05, two-tailed. ** *p* < .01, two-tailed.

STUDY 3: RESPONDENTS’ DEFINITIONS OF ENTERTAINMENT

Though the results of the first two studies were promising, we became concerned with two matters of construct validity. First, we wanted to confirm that our participants were defining the construct of entertainment in the same way that we intended, that is, in a largely passive manner. Second, we wanted to try to differentiate NEnt from a seemingly related construct—sensation seeking. Previous research has shown that sensation seeking can affect the selection of specific entertainment, such as music (Litle & Zuckerman, 1986) and film (Schierman & Rowland, 1985). However, though sensation seeking may impact particular entertainment preferences, it has not been shown to impact the overall amount of sought entertainment in the way that we believe NEnt should.

Method and Procedure

To explore the meaning of entertainment for respondents, 60 Ohio State University undergraduates (introductory psychology pool) completed all sections of a booklet

consisting of three parts: (1) the 19-item NEnt questionnaire (i.e., the bold-face items in Table 14.1), (2) questions designed to elicit a personal definition of entertainment, and (3) the 39-item Sensation-Seeking Scale Form V (Zuckerman, 1994, 1996). In the second part, participants read the following:

You just answered some questions about “entertainment.” In the space below, please define what “entertainment” meant to you when you were answering the questions on the previous page: [followed by a rectangular space measuring $2'' \times 4''$]

What experiences or activities are good examples that illustrate your personal definition of “entertainment”? Please list up to four answers in the spaces below. [followed by four blank lines]

Results

Although we regard a sample of 60 participants as too small for conclusive factor analyses, we again observed the third factor (Passivity). The factor loadings can be seen in the 4th, 7th, and 10th columns of Table 14.4.

We coded respondents' definitions into three categories: passive ($N = 43$), active ($N = 12$), and unclear or ambiguous ($N = 5$). Two verbatim examples of a passive definition were “a show being put on for you: watching TV, listening to music, going to the movies” and “TV, movies, theater, etc.; something that keeps you entertained, usually observing.”

Two verbatim examples of an active definition were “entertainment—something you do for pleasure: hunting, fishing, backpacking” and “entertainment is interacting with others and making sure that all parties involved are having a good time. I consider entertainment activities physical and therefore not something lazy people do: volleyball, swimming, dance.” A verbatim example of an unclear definition was “I see entertainment as anything in life really. Just common everyday experiences entertain me: people, life, experiences.” In sum, only about 20% of the respondents personally defined entertainment in a clearly nonpassive fashion.

But did people who defined entertainment in an active fashion differ from the others? Table 14.7 shows the mean scores for the entire sample and, separately, for passive, active, and unclear self-definers. None of the mean differences for NEnt scores between these subsamples reached statistical significance. However, sensation-seeking scores were higher for the active subsample ($M = 3.51$) than for the passive subsample ($M = 2.99$), $t(53) = 3.404$, $p < .001$.

Finally, at the level of the entire sample, we observed a reliable moderate correlation between the total NEnt score and sensation seeking, $r = .34$, $p < .01$. The correlation between the passivity factor of NEnt and sensation seeking was unreliable, however ($r = -.11$, $n.s.$).

Discussion

The present sample was drawn from the same introductory psychology pool as the samples used in Study 1 and Study 2. Therefore, because only approximately 1 out

TABLE 14.7
Need for Entertainment Means As a Function of Self-Definition of Entertainment
(Passive, Active, or Unclear): Study 3

<i>Sample Analyzed</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>Total NEnt</i>		<i>NEnt Passivity Subscale</i>		<i>SSS-V^a</i>	
		<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Entire Sample	60	3.27	.42	2.20	.79	3.11	.51
Passive Self-Definition	43	3.25	.44	2.25	.74	2.99	.47
Active Self-Definition	12	3.37	.44	2.11	1.07	3.51	.46
Unclear Self-Definition	5	3.19	.21	2.07	.43	3.18	.47

Note. NEnt = Need for Entertainment.

^aSSS-V = Zuckerman Sensation Seeking Scale (Form V).

of 5 respondents defined entertainment in an active fashion, we might infer that the bulk of the respondents (i.e., 70% or more) from the earlier samples (Studies 1 and 2) were defining entertainment in a similar fashion: as being entertained, relatively passively, by some exogenous performance or spectacle. Replication of the passivity factor in the present sample reinforced this interpretation.

Regardless of how respondents here defined entertainment, their mean scores on the total NEnt scale, on the passivity subscale, and on the sensation-seeking scales were not differentially affected. The observed association with sensation seeking was moderate; this result, like the correlational evidence of Studies 1 and 2, again suggests that NEnt, as scaled here, is distinctive. NEnt is not measuring sensation seeking or absorption or dispositional transportation.

STUDY 4: IMPACT OF PRIMING PASSIVITY OF ENTERTAINMENT

To further examine the definitional issue we asked Ohio State University undergraduates ($N = 28$) from the same introductory psychology pool as Studies 1, 2, and 3 to first self-define entertainment (cf. the second part of the questionnaire from Study 3) and then complete the 19-item version of the NEnt scale. The NEnt scale in Study 4 now included the following in its instructions: "For the purpose of the task on this page, define 'entertainment' in terms of passive activities—such as movies, TV, watching sports, reading books, etc.—where something is done for you." As in Study 3, participants then completed the Sensation-Seeking scale.

In corroboration of Study 3, the responses of most ($N = 22$) participants were codable as passive (see Study 3). We compared mean scores on total NEnt and on Factor 3 (Passivity) across four samples: Study 1, Study 2, Study 3, and the present study (Study 4) in which a passive definition of entertainment was primed. The means for total NEnt were 3.15, 3.19, 3.27, and 3.11, respectively, for the four samples. These means did not differ statistically. The means on the passivity factor

(Factor 3) were 2.31, 2.34, 2.20, and 2.37, respectively. These means also did not differ statistically.

In sum, priming with a passive definition did not affect NEnt scores. This result is not surprising considering that the majority of respondents—in the current study and in Study 3—spontaneously defined being entertained in a passive-recipient fashion. Recall that participants in Study 4 defined entertainment as their first step. We used our coding of definitions to divide participants at the median into highs and lows in coded passivity. The total NEnt scores for those high ($M = 3.16$) and low ($M = 2.94$) in passivity did not differ statistically. Because the bulk of respondents spontaneously define being entertained in passive-recipient fashion, we believe that it may be superfluous to provide such a definition in future administrations of the NEnt scale.

Finally, we again observed a positive correlation between total NEnt and sensation seeking ($r = .13, ns$). Although this correlation was not statistically significant, and as such we cannot claim true replication of the effect from Study 3, it should be noted the comparatively small sample size in Study 4 would not likely have provided sufficient power to detect small effects.

SCALE STATUS, SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS, AND CONCLUSIONS

Magnitude of need for entertainment may be a fundamental determinant of how media are processed. Our working assumption is that dispositional NEnt drives expectations, framing, and receptivity with respect to all public media communications. Measurement of NEnt may therefore account for blurring of the lines in media as well as help explain how attitudes and behaviors can be influenced by presentations that are largely intended to entertain. Indeed, to the extent that one's NEnt is being satisfied, advocacies presented within narrative modes may be more influential than advocacies presented in rhetorical modes.

The factor structure of NEnt appeared robust across two large data collections. The three factors (see Tables 14.2, 14.3, and 14.4) are sensible and meaningfully related to one another. The present NEnt scale is not specific about kind of entertainment. Similarly, the well-known Need for Cognition scale (Cacioppo & Petty, 1982) is nonspecific: The Need for Cognition scale does not stipulate targets for cognitive effort, such as crossword puzzles or auto mechanics. The results of our NEnt studies suggest that the bulk of our respondents adopted a passive definition of being entertained; they were thinking about TV, movies, and so on when the scale was administered. In future applications of the NEnt scale, we recommend using the 19-item version. Of course, it would be wise to check a small subsample (as in Studies 3 and 4) to verify that being passively entertained is indeed salient for the majority of respondents.

We have not yet taken a position on whether NEnt might be better conceptualized as a trait or as an evaluative disposition. Whether this distinction (need vs. trait

vs. disposition) is important can be settled empirically by the ability of the scale and its constituent factors to fruitfully account for variance that has been hitherto unexplained.

Concurrent with the work specifically concerning NEnt, we are also conducting research in the domain of narrative persuasion (e.g., Green, Garst, & Brock, this volume). These laboratory experiments attempt to contrast the underlying mechanisms of narrative-based and rhetoric-based persuasion. Recent theories on this topic (for a review, see Green, Strange, & Brock, 2002) led us to suspect that NEnt might serve in a moderating role in narrative persuasion. If persuasive messages can be framed within an entertaining medium (e.g., a fictional story), then perhaps individuals who are particularly concerned with entertainment (i.e., individuals high in NEnt) will be more likely to attend to and accept the conclusions of such messages. In this way, NEnt might serve as a moderator of narrative persuasion (but would not moderate rhetorical persuasion), analogous to how Need for Cognition serves as a moderator of rhetorical persuasion (but does not moderate narrative persuasion; see Green & Brock, 2000). The present reliable inverse relationships (Studies 1 and 2) between NEnt and Need for Cognition are consistent with their proposed differential moderating roles in narrative versus rhetorical persuasion.²

Social Replacement Implications of Differences in Need for Entertainment

Entertainment As Birth Control? The role of entertainment in substituting for other kinds of interpersonal relationships has been explicitly recognized in India:

In a mark of frustration over India's perennially stalled family planning efforts, the country's health minister has come up with a proposal to distribute television sets to the masses to keep their minds off procreation. The minister suggested last month to the Indian Parliament that entertainment is an important component of the population policy. To drive down birth rates, he said, we want people to watch television. Members of the opposition scoffed at the idea—but only because it would be expensive. (Holden, 2001, p. 1987)

Aging and Emotional Well-Being. An exception to the general overall decline in function with aging is thought to be emotion, specifically, the greater saliency

²Indeed, the role of individual differences in moderating the impact of entertaining facets of persuasive messages has gained some recent recognition. Conway and Dubé (2002) demonstrated that masculine sex-role orientation predicts greater intent to adopt the recommendations of a persuasive message with humorous content than of the same message without humorous content when the message addressed a threatening health-related topic. Given that we found reliable gender differences in certain aspects of NEnt (see Studies 1 and 2), we might be able to explain such sex-role orientation effects as epiphenomena of NEnt in the persuasive context. Although this is admittedly speculative, we see such experimental paradigms as potential opportunities to demonstrate the power of NEnt across theoretical and disciplinary boundaries.

and improved regulation of emotion. According to developmental authorities at Stanford, "emotional well being, when it does suffer, declines only at the very end of life" (Carstensen & Charles, 1998, p. 144). It turns out that emotional well-being in the second half of life stems, unsurprisingly, from improved satisfaction with real interpersonal relationships. NEnt may moderate the preservation and fostering of real interpersonal relationships. One testable implication is that high NEnt may thwart real interpersonal relationships to the extent that NEnt drives usually solitary behaviors such as watching TV. High NEnt may therefore diminish emotional well-being, an outcome of real interpersonal relationships that does not have to undergo a significant decline in older people.

Reduction of Democracy's Wellsprings. Need for Entertainment may moderate democratic processes. Putnam (2000) compellingly showed that TV viewing undermines the social skills and bonding that contribute to social capital, the wellspring of democracy. Thus, NEnt may be inversely related to participation in the town-meeting types of activities, with their emphasis on social, face-to-face, and give-and-take and inversely related to active decision-making behavior carried out in the real world, such as voting. High levels of NEnt may drive behaviors that are fundamentally inimicable to Toquevillian democracy (Green, 2000; Green & Brock, 1998; Putnam, 2000). We concur with Wolf (1999):

Most people are less likely to look to the family dinner table or the office water cooler for real interpersonal contact. More and more, if you are looking for common ground with family and colleagues, it will be *a shared entertainment experience* [italics added], a few stolen moments in an America Online chat room, a book you know everybody else is reading. . . . Entertainment products put the mass audience on the same wavelength and, while engaging the emotions, they replace the sense of shared community that is disappearing in regular life. (p. 38)

Conclusion

The present research has made preliminary strides toward identifying and scaling individual differences in the preference for seeking out entertaining products and experiences. We agree with Singhal and Rogers (2002) that "never before in history has so much entertainment been so readily accessible to so many people for so much of their leisure time" (p. 119). Further systematic investigations and evaluations of need for entertainment are therefore both worthwhile and timely. We take seriously Postman's warning (1986, p. 155) that spiritual devastation is coming from an enemy with a smiling face. We contend not only that individuals may differ in their need for entertainment but that measurement of such differences will provide a more nuanced and more correct understanding of the implications of this need.

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People and “Their” Television Shows: An Overview of Television Connectedness

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Recently, the realization that individual variations exist among audience members has prompted a more in-depth consideration of the television experience. Using a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodologies, researchers have started to explore how television viewers build relationships, loyalty, and connections with “their” shows, with the characters portrayed in the story lines, and with fellow audience members. In this chapter, we review the existing work on these more complex conceptualizations of television consumption and provide an overview of *Television Connectedness*. We present a conceptual model illustrating the types of relationships represented by connectedness and propose a series of theoretical propositions relating connectedness to various aspects of the psychology of the consumption of television programming.

Television audience measurement began many years ago to support the sale of advertising space and to determine the success of programming strategy. For more than 3 decades now, Nielsen has dominated television ratings at the national and local levels with its measures of the audience size of network shows via its *people meters*—electronic set-top boxes that are placed in 5,000 homes around the country (Nielsen Media, 2002). This and other traditional audience measures are often limited to bulky, global TV-watching frequency that only consider sizes of audience segments and measure an audience as only a homogenous sample in terms of viewing intensity (Beville, 1988). However, empirical evidence shows that people define *watching* as everything from “eating a snack while looking at

the TV” to “sitting in a room where the TV set is on, but not looking at the screen or listening” (Clancey, 1994, p. 4) to instances when they might be intensely connected with the programs and the characters in them (Russell & Puto, 1999). Although these consumption experiences are clearly different, such differences are not captured by quantity audience measures.

We believe that viewers of current and popular television series, such as *Friends*, *ER*, or *The Drew Carey Show*, actually vary greatly in the ways in which and the extent to which they feel any relationship with the television programs they watch. Some viewers may become very connected to a program—visiting *The Drew Carey Show*’s Web site to see how they fare as a fan by playing the *Drew or False* trivia game, asking their hairstylist to recreate *Friends*’ Rachel’s latest hair color and style, or spending all of their extra cash to dress like the characters on *The Practice*. Others may be regular viewers, enjoying the entertainment of the show but not noticing or remembering many specifics about the characters or the show’s story lines. Still others may watch a program “just because it’s on” or simply to “pass the time away . . . when I’m bored” (Rubin & Perse, 1987, p. 258).

Given this potential variation across audience members, the traditional reliance on the overall amount of television watching or audience size as a measure of television consumption seems to ignore important qualitative distinctions in the experience. Specifically, such measures do not account for the fact that audience size is not necessarily related to audience evaluation (Barwise & Ehrenberg, 1987). Additionally, the quantity of television watching does not account for variances in how people watch and the motivations for watching television (Clancey, 1994), emotional/affective responses to television programs (Pavelcheck, Antil, & Munch, 1988), and the nature and strength of the overall individual–show relationships (Russell & Puto, 1999).

CONCEPTUALIZING TELEVISION CONSUMPTION

Existing literature, particularly in the mass communications discipline, provides insights into the different facets of the consumption of TV programming. The uses and gratifications paradigm of communications research, for instance, has identified many benefits that viewers might seek from their television experience. In their research on the consumption of television news, Levy and Windahl (1984) stressed the need for entertainment–parasocial interaction, surveillance, and interpersonal utility. Rubin and Perse’s (1987) research on soap operas identified five viewing motives: desire for exciting entertainment, desire to pass time, voyeurism, escapist relaxation, information, and social utility. Lee and Lee (1995) also identified commitment to viewing, mood improvement, informational benefit, social learning, and social grease as some of the key descriptors of viewers’ motivations

for consumption of TV programs. Although these approaches have been instrumental in identifying the motivations behind television consumption, they have yet to effectively demonstrate the effects of television on viewers beyond those explained by measures of overall television viewing.

Important insights on television consumption also emerged with the advent of qualitative research methods in the fields of media and cultural studies. Ethnographic researchers, such as Morley (1980) and Livingstone (1990), offered rich accounts of television audiences by exploring how viewers interpret and interact with television programs. Qualitative methods also served to understand how subcultures of consumption develop around television programs, with their rituals, paraphernalia, and participation in collective activities, such as fan groups, conventions, and gatherings on the Internet (Kozinets, 2001).

Collectively, existing research suggests that when conceptualizing the consumption of television programs we should recognize that the experience of television extends beyond the actual viewing experience and involves pre- as well as postexposure phases (Levy & Windahl, 1984). Indeed, in addition to addressing responses that occur during the viewing of a program, such as the emotional arousal or the informational benefits (Lee & Lee, 1995), or even active interactions with the program (Whetmore & Kielwasser, 1983), television consumption involves key activities that take place before watching a program, such as selection and anticipation (Perse, 1990), as well as ways that viewers might use a program after they watch it, such as for its social utility (Morley, 1980). Therefore, it is more important to think of viewers' interactions with television along more complex dimensions than quantity or regularity and to recognize that viewers' relationships with television programs may vary in type and intensity. The contributions of the research serve as the basis for our efforts to define and measure connectedness and its implications.

WHAT IS CONNECTEDNESS?

In an attempt to provide a complex and qualitatively rich view of television audience experiences, connectedness research has identified different types of relationships that develop between viewers and their programs. Russell and Puto (1999) initially introduced connectedness as a multidimensional construct that captures the extent to which a television program influences the personal and social aspects of the viewer's life. Through a qualitative assessment of focus groups, in-depth interviews, and Internet fan forums, they demonstrated that connectedness captured a TV program's contribution to a viewer's self and social identity beyond the mere watching experience. In more recent research, a scale of connectedness has been developed and validated (Russell, Norman, & Heckler, 2004) that focuses on the relationships that individual viewers develop with TV shows and the characters

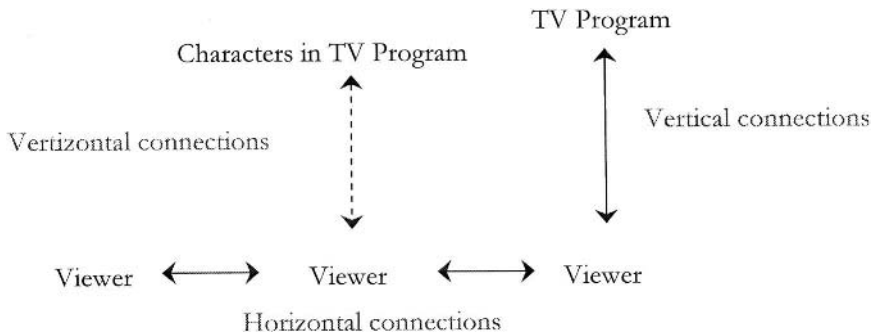


FIG. 15.1 Connections within television consumption.

in those shows. The instrument measures the intensity of the relationships that individuals develop with their television show and thus concentrates on the relationships between the viewer, the program itself, and the characters portrayed in the program.¹

Overall, this research on connectedness proposes that several types of connections develop with television programs. Russell et al. (2004) established that connectedness can involve connections drawn from self-show relationships as well as those developed with the characters in the show. Russell and Puto (1999) also emphasized the social embeddedness of the television experience and the importance of relationships within the community of viewers. Fig. 15.1 captures these different types of connections and provides a model of the connections that exist within the realm of television consumption. In this model, vertical connections reflect the relationships between viewers and their programs, parasocial (or vertical) connections are those that emerge between viewers and the characters in the show, and horizontal connections are those that represent the social relationships between viewers (Frenzen & Davis, 1990). We discuss each dimension in more detail in the following sections.

Vertical Connections: Viewer-Program

Vertical connections are established between an individual viewer and the program itself. Such relationships may be facilitated in various ways. For example, it is common for dedicated viewers of a program to view each and every episode that airs. People typically rearrange their schedules or record episodes of their show to ensure that it is not missed. At the highest levels of connectedness, not only do viewers go out of their way to see each episode but also their emotions might be adversely affected if they miss an episode. In a similar manner, viewing the

¹The scale is available from the first author.

program elevates the mood state of these viewers. Additionally, as relationships with the program develop, viewers characteristically perceive the show as being well written or produced and recommend the show to others. More extreme viewer–program connections may also be manifested in the collection of objects that relate to the show, such as books or pictures.

Horizontal Connections: Viewer–Viewer

Horizontal, or viewer–viewer, relationships form among viewers of the same program. Even at lower levels of connectedness, this type of connection reflects the role of television as a “lubricant to interpersonal communications” (Lee & Lee, 1995, p. 14), providing a way to create or reinforce relationships with others. Indeed, people often watch certain television shows because of their social utility (Rubin & Perse, 1987). Horizontal connections are characterized by more than merely using a program as a topic of conversation. This type of relationship supports the idea that a program can contribute to viewers’ social identity (Russell & Puto, 1999). In our research, focus group participants often commented on their favorite programs as being integral to their relationships with friends, family members, and acquaintances. Favorite programs are often watched regularly by groups of individuals and serve as social bonds to others. More highly connected viewers may even become a part of a community of consumption that forms around a television show, whether this is an informal membership to a club or a more formal affiliation with a fan club or regular viewing group.

Vertizontal Connections: Viewer–Character

The vertizontal dimension of the connectedness framework captures the parasocial interactions that viewers establish with the characters. We coined the term *vertizontal* to capture the notion that it entails both characteristics of the vertical dimension, because characters are part of the program, and features of the horizontal dimension, because connected viewers often think of the characters in their shows as real people who live on similar timescales as they do (Fiske, 1992) and with whom they can relate and interact (Newton & Buck, 1985). This type of connection is therefore more than just a character application of the viewer–program relationship (i.e., “I never miss the program because I want to see my favorite character”). Rather, it is characterized by the influence that characters in a program have on a viewer’s cognitions, attitudes, and behaviors. Highly connected viewers commonly apply or relate material from the program to situations in their own lives. Such viewers also adopt gestures, facial expressions, and vocal characteristics of the characters on their shows. In addition, aspiration is evident when a viewer seeks out hair and clothing styles worn by their favorite characters and connects with them as if they were real (i.e., “I wish I could be a part of the show” or “I get ideas for my life from the characters in the show”).

FURTHER EXPLORATION OF CONNECTEDNESS—THEORETICAL PROPOSITIONS

The conceptual model of the connections within television consumption heretofore presented allows us to develop propositions relating television connectedness to various aspects of the psychology of the consumption of television programming. This next section highlights several key propositions that include an antecedent, correlates, and consequences of connectedness.

Time As an Antecedent to Connectedness

At the core of the construct of connectedness is the notion of relationships. A highly connected viewer has a deeper, more intimate relationship with a show, the characters in the show, and other viewers of the show. Therefore, understanding how connectedness develops can be examined using the literature on relationship development. The transactional philosophy of relationships views them as nonsteady states that are constantly changing (Werner & Baxter, 1994). Time is considered an integral part of the events that shape a relationship, regardless of whether the relationship is growing stronger or deteriorating. A commonly accepted approach to relationship development establishes that relationships pass through a series of stages as they progress from lower to higher levels of intimacy (Davis, 1973; Kelley et al., 1983; Levinger, 1983). Although there is no specified length or even range of time required to pass through each stage, some amount of time is necessary as each stage is experienced. Thus, deeper relationships take more time to form than shallow ones because they have gone through more stages.

If one thinks of a highly connected individual as having a close relationship with a TV show, then what is “close”? One author (Kelley et al., 1983) defines a close relationship in terms of duration of time where the causal connections between the involved parties are strong, frequent, and diverse. Duration is considered one of the primary properties of a close relationship, such that close relationships have endured a considerable length of time. Although the duration of time alone is not sufficient to establish a relationship (various factors affect whether and how relationships are formed), it is a necessary prerequisite. The proposition that time is crucial in fostering connectedness is captured in the following excerpt from one of our interviews: “If you don’t keep up with what’s going on with these shows, you turn it on and it doesn’t mean anything; but if you can keep up on a couple of different shows, it’s easier.”

The basic concept of time passage applies to all three types of connections in our model. Vertical connections develop through continuous viewing of the show, as has been documented in previous research on repeat viewership (Ehrenberg & Wakshlag, 1987; Sherman, 1995). Specifically, Sherman established that television programs with a continuing story line establish a basis for history and therefore

have higher levels of repeat viewing than those that do not. Similarly, as viewers get to know the characters over time, they become more connected to them. Finally, as viewers' individual connectedness levels increase, they may also engage in more horizontal relationships and share their appreciation and attachment for the show with other viewers. Therefore, we propose that, overall, deeper and more intense levels of connectedness require the passage of time.

Correlates of Connectedness

Gender. The nature of connectedness, and especially the vertical dimension, also imply that gender differences may exist. Indeed, feminist theory suggests that female reading style is defined as stronger engagement with a work (Bleich, 1978; Rosenblatt, 1978), and male style is considered detachment (Friestad & Wright, 1994). Female engagement is based on the idea that women are more willing to accept fictional characters as realistic people who act in their own right, whereas men are presumed to look for the reason why the author put them there and made them act the way they do. Similarly, previous research has shown that men and women interpret television programs differently and that women are more likely to invest themselves in and identify with the characters (Stern & Russell, 2001). This in turn is likely to trigger stronger parasocial connections with the characters and overall levels of connectedness. We thus expect that women will be more likely to engage with the programs and characters in the programs, therefore generating higher levels of connectedness than men.

Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence. In a similar vein, individuals who are high in susceptibility to interpersonal influence (Bearden, Netemeyer, & Teel, 1989) may be more prone to perceive the characters in their programs as referent others and thus develop stronger vertical connections with them. If an individual is highly susceptible to the influence of a person in a given situation, that individual will also be more susceptible to the influence of the characters in a program to which they are connected because they perceive those characters as referent others. Therefore, we propose that susceptibility to interpersonal influence will be correlated with connectedness.

Imaginal Ability. The very nature of the vertical dimension suggests that certain personality characteristics may make some individuals more prone to engaging in such parasocial interactions. For instance, highly imaginative individuals would be more likely to expand their favorite television characters' lives to other activities or settings. They might even go as far as writing fictional stories about them, as has been documented in previous research (e.g., Jenkins, 1994). One participant we interviewed was actually deeply involved in such fan fiction. She discussed the process through which she and other connected viewers create and

publish *fanzines* (i.e., fan-created fiction stories):

Some fans produce songvids. People take existing footage from shows and choose a theme or song, and recut it and do their own videos and tell their own stories. It's illegal and underground, but most producers realize that they can't control it. . . . They had no money, so they relied on their scripts instead of special effects. I took some of the producers to lunch during a convention and showed them some of my fanzines, and [they] were very happy to take them. For [them] it was evidence of continuing fan loyalty.

As is clearly the case in this quote, we propose that imaginal ability will be related to connectedness. This is a particularly interesting proposition because previous studies on the relationship between imaginal styles and television use have usually found no association between positive constructive daydreaming and television use (McIlwraith & Schallow, 1983; Schallow & McIlwraith, 1986–1987). What we are proposing instead is that individuals who are high in imaginal ability will be more likely to develop connections to a show because that show provides them opportunities for letting their imagination run wild.

Optimum Stimulation Level. It has long been known that humans can be classified by their need for novel, arousing, or stimulating experiences. The property of optimum stimulation level (OSL) characterizes individuals in terms of their general response to environmental stimuli (Hebb, 1955; Leuba, 1955). This concept holds that every individual seeks to maintain a certain level (or optimum level) of stimulation. When environmental inputs provide stimulation that exceeds the optimum level, a person will try to reduce stimulation by seeking less arousing inputs. When stimulation from the environment falls below the optimum level, a person will seek to increase it. Attempts to increase stimulation have been shown to result in more exploratory behavior (Berlyne, 1960) and the willingness to engage in more risk-taking behavior (Raju, 1980; Zuckerman, Kolin, Price, & Zoob, 1964).

In a media context, a correlation has been established between OSL or sensation seeking and television-viewing motivations. In short, people whose level of arousal exceeds their OSL will seek out less exciting, more relaxing programs to reduce their levels of stress or anxiety (Conway & Rubin, 1991). In terms of viewing motivations, people who are attempting to reduce their level of stimulation will watch television to pass time, escape, or relax. It also follows that if a person trying to reduce stimulation is more likely to explore less and take fewer risks, then such a person would be more likely to stay with programs that are familiar to them rather than switch from program to program.

We propose that OSL and sensation seeking are related to connectedness. As a person becomes highly connected to a show, they not only watch with greater frequency, but they also become more familiar with the show's content and come to know the program and its characters on a deeper level. Low OSL individuals would

remain more committed to that which they know and not take the risk to switch to another show with which they are unfamiliar. In the same manner, we propose that a person with a high OSL would be more likely to sample various programs, watching many different shows occasionally because such individuals have a need for new and, in the novel sense, more stimulating experiences. In short, a person with a low OSL will more likely develop a high level of connectedness with one or more shows relative to a person with a high OSL. This proposed relationship is supported in a more traditional product context by the finding that individuals with high OSLs are more likely to engage in brand switching to satisfy a need for change and variety, whereas those with low OSL are more likely to remain loyal to the brands they consume (Raju, 1980).

Additionally, because low levels of OSL correspond to low risk-taking behavior, the relationship between OSL and connectedness should be affected by the level of perceived risk in switching programs. The perception of risk should be greater as the time spent watching television in general decreases. For individuals who spend little time watching television, television viewing time is a scarce resource. Therefore, for individuals with a low OSL that are highly connected to a television program and those who spend little time watching TV should perceive watching any show other than their show as a greater risk than those who watch a great deal of TV. The latter type of individual would have plenty of time to watch the show with which they are connected and still have time to explore other programs without that exploratory behavior posing the risk of missing the show to which they are connected.

We do recognize a possible exception to this proposed relationship between OSL and connectedness. The very nature of connectedness is based on a relationship that is deeper and more intimate. Although this does not necessarily imply that this relationship will be more stimulating, it is possible that a high connection to a show could satisfy the need for stimulation. OSL research defines *stimulating* as inputs that are novel, unfamiliar, risky, or satisfying to the curious. To the extent that such inputs arouse the senses or emotions, they are stimulating (Berlyne, 1960; Hebb, 1955; Leuba, 1955; Mehrabian & Russell, 1974). We thus recognize that a person with a high OSL might satisfy their need for stimulation through a strong connection with a television program, thus arousing the senses or emotions. However, because OSL tends to be based more on arousal from that which is new and unfamiliar, we believe that high connectedness will account for very little in the way of satisfying the need for stimulation across populations.

Consequences of Connectedness

Development of the Self-Concept. The literature on individual-brand relationships (Fournier, 1998) has theorized that, as such relationships form, people link brand associations to various aspects of the self (Escalas, 2002). The self can be defined by various components, and it has been stated that the most salient

aspect of the self at any given moment is the working self-concept (Markus & Kunda, 1986). Although each individual's self-concept consists of many different roles, aspects, and characteristics, brand associations may become linked to the mental representations that individuals hold of themselves (Krugman, 1965). The extent to which a person uses a brand to construct, cultivate, and express his or her self-concept defines the concept of self-brand connections (Escalas & Bettman, 2000).

One of the main factors that has been linked to the development of self-brand connections is the extent to which individuals engage in narrative processing in relation to the brand (Escalas, 2004). Narrative processing is characterized by the presence of a structure that provides temporal and relational organization and a basis for causal inferencing. In a consumer context, not only does the structure of narrative processing facilitate in the generation of brand associations but also narrative thought is likely to facilitate the integration of brand information from the marketing environment with brand experiences. Because people tend to create their self-identity through narratives about themselves, narrative thought is also likely to create a link between brand associations and experiences and a person's self-concept (Polkinghorne, 1991).

It is relatively simple to conceive of a television show as a brand. TV shows are developed and marketed with specific target audiences in mind. There are many TV shows in a given genre or program category. TV shows consist of names, symbols, features (characters and settings), and characteristics (underlying moods engendered or personality traits that can be applied). Considering a TV program as a brand, we propose that narrative thought facilitates the formation of show-related associations and the creation of a link between a television program and a person's self-concept. As people think about a brand or a television show in narrative form, they become more connected to a show, and show associations are more likely to be used to cultivate and express their self-concept.

Identification and Social Comparison. As connected viewers interact with their favorite TV characters, the influence they may receive from them resembles that triggered from traditional interpersonal relationships (Perse & Rubin, 1990). Indeed, as the TV characters exceed their textual existence, they become referent others to the connected viewers, providing them with a source of identification (Harwood, 1999; McCracken, 1986), of social comparison (Richins, 1991), and even of inspirational goals that connected viewers choose to work toward (Hirschman & Thompson, 1997). This process is especially powerful with fictional characters because the dramatic nature of TV programming elicits expressions of feeling and verisimilitude instead of counterargumentation (Deighton, Romer, & McQueen, 1989).

Such parasocial relationships develop with characters in TV shows because viewers find them personally relevant and can therefore identify with them.

This personal relevance can be triggered in many different ways: Age group, professional situation or interest, marital or familial situation all contribute to initiating this process of identification (e.g., Harwood, 1999). For instance, in our interviews, we found that medical school students developed deeper connections to the characters in *ER* because they represented the hospital environment in which they aspired to work. Similarly, a young woman reported liking the series *Lifeworks* because she could relate to the situations in the life of the main character—a mom going back to school. The process of identification may also happen as a projection in the past or in the future. One interviewee explained that her mother and stepfather watched *Home Improvement* to “make up for missing those family times.” Yet another informant felt a connection to the character Kramer of *Seinfeld* because he used to have hair like him “back in the good old days.”

In sum, connectedness triggers a process of identification and social comparison with the characters.

Product Placement Effectiveness. Because of this process of social comparison, connectedness has consequences when evaluating the effectiveness of marketing efforts placed within TV programs, particularly product placements. Russell and Puto (1999) found that highly connected viewers were not only more likely to pay attention to and to be interested in the brands portrayed in their shows but also that they responded more positively to product placement efforts. The following inquiry in an Internet chat room where connected viewers of *Mad About You* meet and chat about their show clearly illustrates this type of influence:

I just recently saw the rerun where Jamie and Paul buy the tea-colored couch (or is it a loveseat?) for their apartment. Does anyone know if that couch . . . is available at a store or where to get something similar? I would love to find something like it.

Similar Internet postings provide insights into the motivations for such requests. Viewers explain, sometimes at length, how much they relate to or aspire to a character's lifestyle and even emulate it. For instance, connected viewers of *Sex and the City* proudly announced that they were throwing a party for the season premiere and would serve “cosmopolitans and tartinis,” products that have become symbolic of the characters' lifestyle on the show.

Because they identify with and compare themselves to television characters, connected viewers are very attentive to the surroundings of their characters and get ideas for their own lives from the lifestyles they vicariously experience through television programs. Many TV program Web sites have capitalized on this phenomenon and provide links to stores where such viewers can order the furniture or clothes they have observed in their television shows. Therefore, as initially proposed by Russell and Puto (1999), we anticipate that connectedness will increase the effectiveness of product placement.

Community Building. Our connectedness research acknowledges that the television watching experience is often a social endeavor because viewers watch TV with friends and family or talk about the programs with others. The relational uses of television include the facilitation of communication based on the show and the use of the television set as a source of interpersonal contact or avoidance (Lull, 1980). Whether viewers engage in joint consumption, watching their shows with their friends and family, or whether the consumption experience is discussed with other viewers at a later point, TV series generate a great amount of word-of-mouth communication and even become a catalyst for community building.

This horizontal embeddedness (Frenzen & Davis, 1990) of the television consumption experience can indeed be such that subcultures of consumption may form around TV shows (Schouten & McAlexander, 1995). These subcultures can form casually among existing social circles as well as formally in the case of fan clubs or specialized chat rooms on the Internet (Kozinets, 2001). Regardless of the nature of the subculture, the joint experience of watching or discussing a program with others can increase the emotional experience through the appraisal of another person's presence and emotional contagion (Jakobs, Fisher, & Manstead, 1997) and thus makes TV programs an important locus of interpersonal influence (Reingen, Foster, Brown, & Seidman, 1984). One respondent we interviewed describes, in his own words, the meaning of such in- and out-groups:

It was a community bonding thing too. Finding people that had the same interest and quoting it with them. The whole Comedy Central lineup has a following. There's a sort of pleasure derived from finding people with similar sense of shared culture. You share the same cultural reference points. The *Simpsons* itself is very intertextual. If people were getting the same jokes that I was, it means they've seen the same sort of things. Like, the first time the grad students went out to a bar, we played the 6 degrees of Kevin Bacon. In a perverse way, it's fun when you quote things and people don't know what you're talking about. It's community building, like in high school quoting teen comedies.

Clearly, in this excerpt, we sense how television programs can foster a cultural identification among viewers, especially during the developmental phase of the teenage years (Arnett, 1995). Many of our respondents talked about being horizontally connected as requiring a "unique know," as exemplified in the following example of a group of friends connected to the NBC Must See lineup on Thursday nights:

I've got a large circle of friends and maybe we can't always watch the shows, but we make sure that we get the tape recorder going. I have to actually divi out my tapes, and then I wait for people to watch them and then talk to them.

Because the horizontal dimension refers to social interactions among viewers of the same program, it is likely to be affected by personality characteristics related

to socialization. For instance, introverted individuals may be less likely to admit their connections to certain programs or characters publicly and resort to private consumption or anonymous forums for discussion, as can be observed in Internet chat rooms.

Regardless of the mechanisms viewers use to participate in communities of consumption, we propose that connectedness will lead to the development of such communities.

IMPLICATIONS OF OUR CONNECTEDNESS RESEARCH

A recent *Advertising Age* article urged advertisers to reconsider their media placement strategies because “at a time when America is running from advertising as fast as it can click, advertising return-on-investment depends on a new definition of ‘prime time.’ To be designated prime time, a medium must be capable of riveting its audience—and that connection must be measured” (Rossi, 2002, p. 16). Clearly, our research efforts echo this call by documenting the need to think of television audiences not in terms of numbers but in terms of levels of connectedness. As we discussed, certain programs may carry relatively small audiences but these audiences may be strongly connected to them, the characters within them, and the other audience members.

At a time of increasing audience fragmentation, a connected audience may indeed be more important than a large audience. As we discussed in this chapter, connected viewers are committed to their shows and invest in them a great deal of time, effort, emotion, and passion. Connected audiences are equivalent to loyal customers, who come back for more, season after season, and who are dedicated to their show and characters to the point where the shows help define who the viewers are, how they behave, and even what they consume and whom they interact with.

Our framework of connectedness suggests many venues for research in the realm of television consumption. An area of further investigation involves the interplay between the different types of relationships developed with and involving TV programs. Although all three types of relationships can certainly coexist, it is conceivable, for example, that certain individuals only watch a show to develop horizontal linkages with other viewers of the show or that certain viewers develop parasocial relationships with their characters as a substitute for real relationships with others, maybe because they do not want to publicly admit that they watch the program.

Implications in terms of marketing practices are evident. At a time of increasingly blurred lines between content and promotion, connectedness is an important predictor of the influence received from consumption portrayals in the television programs, such as product placements (Russell, 2002). Technological evolutions within the television industry also prompt television researchers to anticipate further changes in the nature of television consumption. For instance, Forrester

predicts explosive growth of interactive television, stating that over 60 million U. S. households will be able to interact with their TV programming by 2005 (Lee, 2002). These technologies will make it easier for television viewers to blend their Internet and television experiences together, for instance, allowing them to chat online with coviewers as they watch the show or even instantaneously place orders for items they notice on the sets of those shows. This opens many possibilities for research of how such changes will affect the consumption of television.

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The Interplay Among Attachment Orientation, Idealized Media Images of Women, and Body Dissatisfaction: A Social Psychological Analysis

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Social psychologists have focused on the powerful impact of the social environment on human behavior and motivation (Milgram, 1965; Zimbardo, 1972), whereas personality psychologists have long emphasized the power of individual dispositions (McCrae & Costa, 1996). Although social and personality psychologists engaged in a heated debate in the 1970s about the relative importance of person versus situation variables for understanding behavior, social-cognitive formulations (Bandura, 1978; Mischel & Shoda, 1995) have reconciled the two positions by emphasizing the dynamic interplay between what individuals bring to the situation and the situational context itself.

Along similar lines, researchers who study the cluttered environment of the mass media have encountered their own variation of the person versus situation debate. Some communication theorists argue that sheer exposure to the mass media uniformly affects how individuals construct and understand social reality (Gerbner, 1969; Signorelli & Morgan, 1990), whereas others endorse a more selective-effects model (Harris, 1999, p. 17) that conceptualizes media use as a function of the individual needs and gratifications that motivate viewing (Rosengren, 1974; Rubin, 1983). Thus, the former perspective focuses more on the effects of media impact (e.g., situation variables) and the latter focuses more on the dispositional factors that shape viewing choices (e.g., person variables). As with the person-situation debate in social and personality psychology, however, it makes sense to integrate the two perspectives. For example, although the cultivation theory of media effects

describes how media function as one large gravitational force, the model is qualified by an acknowledgment that "the angle and direction of the 'pull' depends on where groups of viewers and their styles of life are with reference to the line of gravity" (Gerbner, Gross, Morgan, Signorielli, & Shanahan, 2002, p. 49). Research on media violence clearly illustrates the usefulness of applying both person and situation approaches. Specifically, although studies have documented the generalized impact of violent content on the majority of viewers (Comstock, this volume; Paik & Comstock, 1994), it is clearly important to understand which young boys who play violent video games, for example, are likely to bring a gun to school and to intentionally harm their peers. In this vein, much work has focused on which individual difference variables moderate responses to violent media content. Characteristics such as hypermasculinity (Scharrer, 2001), aggression (Bushman, 1995), and sensation seeking (Zuckerman, 1996) in men have been associated with the tendency to enjoy and be more influenced by media violence. Ultimately, each perspective on media influence is incomplete without the other; it is only by examining the roles of the person, the situation, and their interaction that we may begin to clarify the complex relationship between media content and media effects.

One of the most widely researched media domains in recent years, whose causal explanation lies somewhere in the murky waters between person and situation, is the association of idealized images of female beauty and the body image disturbances that plague young girls and women. This line of research follows from the observation that parallel and marked increases have occurred in both a slender media ideal of female beauty and in the proportion of young girls and women who experience anything from normative discontent with their bodies (Rodin, Silberstein, & Striegel-Moore, 1985) to fatal eating disorders. As with the impact of violent media content, not all women who are exposed to idealized female images in the mass media develop body preoccupation and eating disorders. It is therefore crucial to understand which women may be most vulnerable; how the media and commercial industry may transform relational concerns into appearance concerns, thereby fueling the anxieties of all young women as they negotiate and struggle to achieve an idealized body type; and how particular individual vulnerabilities interact with the information and images presented in the media.

In the first part of this chapter, we briefly review the literature on media exposure and eating disorders and focus on a person variable that may be useful in understanding the nature of this association. Specifically, we propose that a young woman's relational style, as captured by measures of adult attachment orientation (Hazan & Shaver, 1987), may heighten her vulnerability to be influenced by idealized images of female beauty. We then outline some preliminary data pointing toward an interaction among attachment style, media perceptions, and body image concerns. Next, relevant to the overall theme of this volume, we focus on the increasingly ambiguous lines between fantasy and reality and between entertainment and fashion that may lead young women to experience their attachment needs as

body image concerns. Specifically, young women may be encouraged to feel connected to celebrities' personal lives through interview shows and entertainment magazines and even to think of such celebrities as their friends, when, in fact, the relationships are inherently one-sided. These feelings of identification and idealization may then manifest in an attempt to emulate the impossibly perfect and slender appearance of both the fictional characters portrayed by the celebrities and the celebrities themselves. Finally, we examine the social comparison processes that may underlie these vulnerable young women's ambivalent response to media images and ultimately lead them to feel intensely dissatisfied with their own appearance.

MEDIA AND BODY IMAGE

The majority of research examining the relationship between media exposure to idealized female forms and body image concerns has revealed that greater exposure leads to greater body image concerns, but the causal nature and direction of this association remains unclear. Most studies have documented a correlational relationship between the two (Harrison & Cantor, 1997; Stice & Shaw, 1994) and thus cannot determine causality. However, even studies that have experimentally manipulated media exposure have difficulty pinning down causality because such exposure appears to negatively impact those women already preoccupied with eating and weight (Hamilton & Waller, 1993; Heinberg & Thompson, 1995; Posovac, Posovac, & Posovac, 1998). Thus, these correlational data leave open the questions of how and why those individuals become particularly vulnerable. Further, although some researchers have attempted to identify an underlying psychological mechanism linking media to eating disorders by postulating the risk factor of ideal body type internalization (Heinberg & Thompson, 1995; Stice, Schupak-Neuberg, Shaw, & Stein, 1994), this explanation does not provide an answer for why some people are more likely to internalize this ideal than others.

One notable study (Harrison, 1997) has helped to address the question of why some women are more vulnerable, suggesting that self-selected exposure to media images may be the surface manifestation of a more active relationship with idealized images. In this study, women who were more interpersonally attracted to thin media personalities were more likely to evidence eating disorder symptoms, and this relationship held even after the researchers controlled for individual differences in the frequency and quality of media consumption. Harrison concluded, "Young women's patterns of disordered eating . . . are related not only to the types of media that they expose themselves to, but *also the way they perceive and respond to specific mass media characters*" (Harrison, 1997, p. 494, emphasis added). Thus, a more active, relational process may help explain the media—eating disorders link. However, the question still remains: Which women are interpersonally attracted

to thin characters? We propose that women's attachment orientations—the characteristic way in which they think about themselves in relation to others—may shape how they perceive and respond to idealized media images of women. We first provide an overview of adult attachment theory and then explain how individual differences in attachment orientations might influence responses to unrealistic media portrayals of women.

OVERVIEW OF ADULT ATTACHMENT THEORY

Adult attachment theory (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Hazan & Shaver, 1987), derived from Bowlby's (1969, 1973) formulation of the attachment of infants to their primary caregiver, suggests that children build internal working models of themselves in relation to others on the basis of the responsiveness, availability, and sensitivity of early caregivers. These internal working models are thought to include sets of beliefs, expectations, and goals about the self in relation to others that shape the way in which people think about, respond to, and negotiate their social worlds.

The precise content of individuals' working models is determined by the nature of their experiences with important others throughout the life course. Through positive early experiences with caregivers, people acquire a sense of felt security (Sroufe & Waters, 1977) that enables them to feel protected and valued by others, even when they are alone. If people fail to acquire felt security, they may develop unstable, negative views of self in relation to others. In childhood, experiences with primary caregivers are thought to be central to the development of working models, whereas experiences with peers and romantic partners may contribute to and modify working models in adolescence and adulthood (Zeifman & Hazan, 1997). Research on attachment in adults has focused on adult children's orientations toward their relationships with parents (e.g., Main, Kaplan, & Cassidy, 1985) as well as other close relationships, such as those with best friends and romantic partners (e.g., Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Collins & Read, 1990). (The extent to which specific continuity exists across these developmental stages remains open for empirical and theoretical debate and is beyond the scope of this chapter.)

Individual differences in adult attachment style are captured by two dimensions—models of self and models of others—which yield four adult attachment patterns: secure, preoccupied, fearful-avoidant, and dismissing-avoidant (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Adults who evidence a secure pattern hold a positive view of themselves and others, and they report low levels of anxiety and avoidance of intimacy in interpersonal relationships. They are able to trust and depend on their partners to care for them and comfort them in times of distress. Adults with an insecure pattern, in contrast, experience some difficulty negotiating anxiety, avoidance of intimacy, or both, in close relationships. Specifically, adults showing a preoccupied pattern hold negative views of self and positive views of

others, and they score low on avoidance of intimacy but high on anxiety. They are eager to seek out and form close relationships but have trouble trusting that their partner truly cares for them and will be there for them in times of need. Adults who show the fearful-avoidant or dismissing-avoidant pattern both view others in a negative way and score high on avoidance of intimate relationships, but they differ from one another in their reported views of self and in their levels of anxiety. Whereas fearful-avoidant individuals hold a negative model of self and steer clear of intimacy because they fear rejection, dismissing-avoidant individuals appear to hold a positive view of self, and they claim that they are content without close partnerships. However, the latter reports may reflect defensive denial (Fraley, Davis, & Shaver, 1998).

In addition to describing working models as beliefs about self and other, some researchers have taken a more dynamic route, endeavoring to assess adult attachment in terms of underlying motivational and behavioral processes. Pietromonaco and Feldman Barrett (2000) posit that the four attachment styles may be distinguished from one another by two related processes: the degree to which the need for felt security is activated and the extent to which interpersonal relationships are used to regulate this need. For example, the attachment system of secure adults may be activated only in times of objective distress, during which these adults will attempt to gain comfort by seeking the support of close others in their lives. The attachment system of dismissing avoidants, on the other hand, may be (defensively) deactivated, preventing them from either consciously experiencing attachment distress or relying on others for support. In contrast to secure and dismissing-avoidant individuals, those with preoccupied and fearful-avoidant styles may experience a hyperactivated attachment system. Having less stable and less positive views of self, they may interpret many situations as threatening to their esteem (Pietromonaco & Feldman Barrett, 2000). The difference between these styles exists, therefore, not in their heightened need for felt security but in the way they cope with this chronic state of arousal. Fearful-avoidant individuals, afraid of rejection, may feel conflicted about depending on others in times of distress. Preoccupied individuals, however, may depend excessively on various others in their lives to gain validation and reassurance. This reliance on others is in line with their tendency to idealize others and devalue themselves.

Adult attachment theory provides a framework for understanding why some women may be especially vulnerable to the deleterious effects of idealized media images. First, although most attachment research focuses on the degree to which adults use actual others in the service of obtaining felt security, new evidence suggests that imagined others, such as those found in the mass media, also may address attachment needs. Women with a preoccupied attachment orientation, who tend to rely more on others to serve attachment needs (Feldman Barrett & Pietromonaco, 2002), then, also may use imagined others in the interest of obtaining felt security. Second, this use of imagined others may render women with a preoccupied attachment orientation especially sensitive to the idealized ultra-thin images projected by

the media and thus more susceptible to eating disordered behavior. This hypothesis fits with clinical and developmental research (O'Kearney, 1996; Ward, Ramsay, & Treasure, 2000) indicating that women with disordered eating patterns are more likely to evidence a preoccupied attachment style. In the next two sections, we discuss how attachment orientations might be connected to media relationships as well as to eating disorders.

Attachment and Media Relationships

Modern media now engages old brains. . . . There is no switch in the brain that can be thrown to distinguish between the real and mediated worlds. People respond to simulations of social actors and natural objects as if they were in fact social, and in fact, natural. (Reeves & Nass, 1996, p. 12)

Believing the mass media to be an inherently social domain, communications researchers have developed a measure of parasocial interaction (Rubin, Perse, & Powell, 1985), or the degree of perceived closeness experienced by individuals with their favorite television characters. They also have begun to examine how adult attachment orientations might shape the nature of relationships with media images. Although only two studies have been conducted on the topic (Cohen, 1997; Cole & Leets, 1999), preliminary evidence suggests that people with a preoccupied attachment orientation may engage in more intense parasocial interaction than those with either a secure or avoidant orientation. In explanation of this finding, researchers speculate that television characters may provide individuals who show a preoccupied attachment pattern with the reliable, if illusory, feelings of intimacy that they crave in their real-life relationships (Cole & Leets, 1999). As further support for the idea that parasocial goals may reflect real-life relationship goals, individuals with an avoidant orientation were least likely to engage in parasocial relationships (Cole & Leets, 1999).

In addition to providing a direct means of obtaining felt security by functioning as surrogate attachment figures, media characters also may provide felt security indirectly, by enabling vicarious identification with highly valued icons. The phenomenon of deriving pleasure from identification with an idealized other has piqued the interest of both psychodynamic and social cognitive theorists. Rauch (1987), who takes a psychodynamic perspective, suggests that feeling connected to idealized media images may feed a primitive desire to replicate the original parent-child bond, noting that "the subject's need for love and recognition by an other is substituted by an imaginary unified identity derived from the image" (p. 33). This feeling of oneness, derived from actual or imagined closeness with an idealized other, has also been captured by social psychologists (e.g., Aron, Aron, & Smollan, 1992). Aron et al. designed a visually based scale that measures the degree of close self-other overlap, "hypothesized to tap people's *sense* of being interconnected with another" (p. 598). Finally, work on possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) indicates that feelings of self-other overlap may prove to be motivational

in daily life; by fantasizing that we are idealized versions of ourselves, we have the opportunity to simulate and rehearse for various future roles. Following this line of reasoning, attaching to and identifying with idealized images in the mass media may allow insecurely attached individuals to experience, albeit briefly, the felt security that eludes them in their own lives.

Attachment and Eating Disorders

Within the clinical literature, girls and women who have a preoccupied attachment style are overrepresented in eating disordered populations. Both quantitative and qualitative studies have documented striking parallels between the psychological patterns underlying attachment insecurity and body image and eating concerns. Empirical studies have found a link between insecure attachment and relational anxieties in adult relationships and eating disorder symptoms (Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Evans & Wertheim, 1998; Friedberg & Lyddon, 1996; Sharpe et al., 1998). Although two extensive reviews of the literature (O’Kearney, 1996; Ward et al., 2000) caution that the findings do not support a direct, causal relationship between insecure attachment and eating disorders, researchers note that “the overwhelming message from the research literature is of abnormal attachment patterns in eating disorder populations” (Ward et al., 2000, p. 45).

The clinical profile of bulimic individuals, in particular, resembles that of a person with a preoccupied attachment orientation. As mentioned earlier, preoccupied individuals tend to idealize others and seek their approval, while at the same time devaluing themselves and having a low awareness for their own needs and boundaries. Similarly, researchers (Friedberg & Lyddon, 1996; Guidano, 1987) have noted that both anorexic and bulimic individuals have trouble separating their own emotions from those around them and that bulimic individuals, in particular, tend to be overly idealizing of others and concerned with receiving social approval while lacking a sense of self-worth. Although insecure attachment may be linked to psychopathology in general, and thus it may be premature to link specific attachment styles to specific eating disorder symptoms (see Ward et al., 2000), the constellation of findings on attachment, media, and eating disorders merits further exploration.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER: ATTACHMENT STYLES, MEDIA, EATING DISORDERS

Given the overlap in the literatures on adult attachment style, media consumption, and eating disorders, it is surprising that no one, to our knowledge, has attempted to integrate all three domains of inquiry. Research on media and attachment has yet to incorporate the problem of eating disorders, and research on media and eating disorders has yet to use attachment style as a potentially useful individual risk factor. Finally, research on attachment and eating disorders has yet to include media consumption into the hypothesized etiological models. In an effort to connect the

various associations reviewed thus far, we propose that a preoccupied attachment style may motivate individuals to use idealized images in the interest of obtaining a temporary sense of felt security. This security may manifest as a sense of imagined closeness to, and vicarious identification with, idealized television icons. However, given the inevitable failure of two-dimensional images to generate actual attachment security, and given the ultra-thin body type that currently presides over the television landscape, emotional engagement with television role models may ultimately perpetuate feelings of both relational anxiety and body dissatisfaction.

Preliminary Empirical Investigation

We conducted a study to begin to examine the links between attachment, media consumption, and body image concerns. We predicted that women with a preoccupied attachment style would identify with, idealize, and feel closest to favorite female television characters and, because the majority of female television stars tend to have ultra-thin body types, we predicted that these feelings of identification, idealization, and closeness to a favorite female television character would be associated with greater body image concerns. Participants were 132 women at the University of Massachusetts who were surveyed about their attachment styles, media viewing habits and favorite characters, and body image concerns. Attachment styles were assessed using a multi-item measure (Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998) including both anxiety (e.g., "I worry about being abandoned"; "I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by my partner") and avoidance subscales (e.g., "I get uncomfortable when a romantic partner wants to be very close"; "I prefer not to show my partner how I feel deep down"). Media questions (adapted from Harrison, 1997; Rubin et al., 1985) were designed to target feelings of identification with (e.g., perceived similarity to) idealization of (e.g., wanting to act/look like), and feelings of closeness with favorite television characters. Finally, body image disturbance was assessed using McKinley and Hyde's (1996) Objectified Body Consciousness Scale and included subscales for body shame (e.g., "When I'm not the size I think I should be, I feel ashamed") and body surveillance (e.g., "During the day, I think about how I look many times").

In keeping with our original assumption about the body types of female characters, the majority of selected female characters (coded following Harrison, 1997) were indeed ultra-thin compared with average or heavy characters. (Unexpectedly, just over half of our sample chose men as favorite characters. However, to focus on our specific hypotheses, the analyses reported in this chapter include only those choosing favorite female characters). It bears mentioning that in TV-land, being average is, of course, a relative phenomenon. For example, although Rachel of *Friends*, the most popularly chosen female character, was coded as ultra thin, characters such as Phoebe of *Friends* and Elaine of *Seinfeld* were coded as average. Moreover, choosing an ultra-thin, female character was significantly linked to both appearance idealization and body shame. Specifically, we found that women who chose an ultra-thin character reported a significantly greater desire to look like that character and higher levels of body shame/surveillance.

Our first prediction, that preoccupied women would report greater attachment-relevant feelings toward a favorite character, was supported. Women scoring higher in attachment anxiety and lower on avoidance (i.e., who fit the profile for the preoccupied attachment pattern) reported the greatest perceived identification with, feelings of closeness to, and wanting to be like and look like a favorite female character. Our second prediction, that these attachment-relevant feelings would be associated with greater body image concerns, was partially supported. Specifically, one variable—wanting to look like a favorite female character—was significantly associated with greater body shame/surveillance. Finally, to replicate previous research, we wanted to test the relationship between attachment style and body concerns. Although we did not obtain the expected interaction of high anxiety and low avoidance, greater attachment anxiety was associated with more body shame/surveillance. When we entered the media variable of appearance idealization into the same regression equation, both attachment anxiety and wanting to look like a favorite character remained significant predictors of body shame/surveillance. The continued significance of both variables suggests that attachment orientation and the desire to look like a favorite media character do not cancel each other out but contribute independently to feelings of body anxiety.

Our findings highlight the underlying relational processes in the media—eating disorders equation. Women with a preoccupied attachment style were most likely to report a constellation of attachment-relevant feelings for their favorite female character. Furthermore, one of these feelings, wanting to look like a favorite character, was significantly associated with body shame. Although we cannot determine causality from these cross-sectional, correlational data, the findings are consistent with the possibility that attachment needs may drive relational engagement with media figures, which, in turn, may exacerbate body image concerns. Understanding the psychological motivations that may provoke preoccupied women to attach to specific media characters is only one part of the story. To understand how using specific media characters in the interest of attachment needs ultimately may lead to greater body image concerns, it is also necessary to examine the way in which the media encourages us to view these super-slim, glamorous stars as parasocial, deceptively accessible friends as well as fashion icons.

THE ROLE OF THE MASS MEDIA

The mass media has begun to blur some critical lines—between the self and other, fiction and reality, and entertainment and fashion—which may facilitate the process by which women with a preoccupied attachment style feel close to and desire to emulate their favorite television icons. Indeed, the very success of a media or commercial endeavor often depends on how seamlessly individuals are able to weave their own lives into those lived by fictional characters on television and in magazines. Moreover, the media and commercial industries also thrive on degree of perceived closeness, identification, and idealization of the real-life people behind

the characters. Ultimately, the more accessible and engaging media characters and personalities are, the more convincing they may be as role models. As research on the concept of transportation in narratives suggests, the more absorbed people are in a story, the more likely they are to hold story-consistent beliefs and positive views of the leading characters (Green & Brock, 2000; Green, Garst, & Brock, this volume). To the extent that the media effectively transports viewers, young women may be more likely to perceive ultra-thin and seemingly perfect female characters as positive role models and attempt to emulate them. However, as we discuss later, it is this attempted emulation of an unattainable and unrealistic body type that may make women with a preoccupied attachment style most vulnerable to body shame.

The very title of the NBC hit sitcom *Friends* is one illustration of a fuzzy boundary created between viewers and the inherently social domain of the media world. *Friends* describes more than the characters' relationships with one another; it describes the relationship that viewers are repeatedly asked to cultivate with the six young characters as we consider them to be our friends. Further, we may also compare the dynamics of our own group of friends to the televised version and wonder who among them is the wisecracking but loveable Chandler or the ditzzy but creative Phoebe. Indeed, the ease with which viewers can relate to the cast has been heralded as the reason why *Friends* has continued to hold viewers' attention while other long-running series have lost their momentum. In a *New York Times* article titled "What 'Friends' Has Going for it . . . That 'Ally Mcbeal' and the 'X-Files' Didn't Have," the author explains that, compared with the other two shows, *Friends* was able to "maintain the essential connection between the viewers and the characters on screen" (James, 2002, B5).

But our feelings of empathy and connection to television stars is hardly limited to the fictional characters they play; we also are invited to get to know the actors and actresses behind the characters we see daily in the reliable world of syndication. In a sense, we are given two friends for the price of one. Celebrity magazines and entertainment news and interview programs allow us to experience an illusory intimacy with our favorite characters and the actors who play them. We are enticed to buy magazines featuring a favorite character with promises of gaining access to the details of their personal lives. For example, Courtney Cox Arquette, known for her role as Monica on *Friends* appeared on the cover of *Redbook* with the caption, "The gutsy *Friends* star on how she put a tragic year behind her and opened her heart to love. PLUS: Her secret marriage vow" (June 2002). Just as we delight in being privy to the emotional lives of our actual friends and acquaintances, so we are thrilled to hear the inside scoop on seemingly unattainable Hollywood stars. Furthermore, there is no shortage of this inside scoop with various interview shows appropriately titled, *Intimate Portraits* (Lifetime) or *Revealed with Jules Asner* (E!). Magazine writers repeatedly rely on the language of friendship to construct a sense of shared reality between the reader and a featured celebrity. For example, a recent *Seventeen* magazine cover featured Sarah Michelle Gellar of *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* fame with the caption "Stuff she only tells her best friend" (July 2002). Although these ostensibly exclusive and intimate portraits

extend to males as well as females, it is the media access to female celebrity lives that dovetails so easily and conveniently with the ubiquitous commercial industry of fashion and cosmetics.

The extent to which we are given information about celebrities personal lives and feelings is matched only by the extent to which we are given updates about their latest fashion exploits and cosmetic endorsements. We are continually invited to “go behind the scenes and into their closets” (*People Weekly*, 2002, p. 2), as once again the language of intimacy and friendship is used to promote a common bond between the reader and the featured celebrity. A full page in *CosmoGirl* features the clothing style of the young “Vintage vixen” Christina Ricci with the caption, “You and Ms. Ricci share a fashion philosophy: Thrift stores are a girl’s best friend” (2000, p. 86). The page details exactly where to purchase various look-alike articles of clothing and accessories as well as how much they will cost. The use of female stars as fashion billboards is not limited to their real-life personas, however. Young women are repeatedly shown exactly how to emulate their favorite television and movie characters by purchasing a similar style of wardrobe. Sometimes they are told exactly where and for how much they may buy their own version of the skimpy styles worn by favorite characters. Consider for example, the following caption from *US* magazine (“The Sweetest Things,” 2002).

The Sweetest Things: In the looking-for-love comedy *The Sweetest Thing*, best friends Cameron Diaz, Christina Applegate and Selma Blair share more than laughs—they also share a hip, sexy girl’s sense of style. Here’s how to get their looks with a little help from *Us*. (p. 64)

Less common, but perhaps more alarming, women are sometimes given the opportunity to purchase exactly the same wardrobe worn by celebrity characters. A recent article in the *New York Times* encourages appearance emulation: “In Hand-Me-Downs, Dress Like a Star” (Rothman, 2002, D3). Apparently, in preparation for a new season, wardrobe departments sell the previous season’s outfits at more reasonable prices than might otherwise be expected. The article featured the cast from *Sex and the City* and explained how various “flirty dresses” worn by the characters could be purchased at a store in Hollywood. In explanation of the motive behind this type of glamorous vintage shopping, the author notes, “For some . . . the lure is getting designer clothes at fire-sale prices. For others, it is about owning a piece of the dream” (p. D3).

The idea of mixing celebrity with consumerism is not new. As Denise Mann (1992) explains in *Private Screenings: Television and the Female Consumer*:

By encouraging viewers at home to identify with media celebrities whose lives mirror their own, a new form of celebrity worship is invoked and new form of cultural hegemony is validated—one which constructs women as “consumer allies” by aligning the values of home and family with popular media representations of celebrities. (p. 60)

What is new is the proliferation of single female characters selling a stereotyped image of sex appeal, instead of a stereotyped image of domestic family values. What is also new, and highly relevant to the point of this chapter, is the ultra-thin body type that is a virtual prerequisite for fitting into that wardrobe. Finally, it is worth noting that despite the prevalence of less traditionally feminine roles, such as vampire slayers (*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*) and secret agents (*Alias*) that might intuitively lead to athletic or corporate sponsorship, female celebrities, more often than not, end up as figureheads for appearance-oriented products. For example, Sarah Michelle Gellar (*Buffy*), whose character rescues the maiden in distress rather than being one herself (Garcia, 2000), does not advertise for martial arts programs but Maybelline. Young girls and women who identify with and admire Buffy as a powerful, feminist role model are ultimately left with a supermodel for a persuasive icon. Young women with a preoccupied attachment orientation, in particular, may find that the only way to feel close to and identify with their favorite female TV star is to attempt to emulate her physical appearance. Their anxiety may thus manifest in an endless pursuit of material consumption that serves the economy at the expense of young women's mental and physical well-being.

SOCIAL COMPARISON PROCESSES: ASSIMILATION AND CONTRAST

The individual difference variable of attachment style as well as the provocatively appealing media environment may, in combination, propel women into body anxiety and disordered eating. But what specific social psychological processes might underlie the route by which preoccupied young women move from inspired idealization to defeated self-objectification? How might we explain, from an empirical and theoretical standpoint, the sequential ambivalence associated with attaching to an ultra-thin female icon, vividly captured by this testimonial obtained by Naomi Wolf (1991) in her socially significant, if controversial, book, *The Beauty Myth*:

[Women's magazines] give me a weird mixture of anticipation and dread, a sort of stirred-up euphoria. Yes! Wow! I can be better starting from right this minute! Look at her! Look at her! But right afterward, I feel like throwing out all my clothes and everything in my refrigerator and telling my boyfriend never to call me again and blow torching my whole life. (p. 62)

We propose that this double-edged reaction to idealized images might be explained in terms of two different social comparison processes: assimilation and contrast.

Research on the relationship between media exposure and eating disorders has typically referenced the process of social comparison (Festinger, 1954) to explain why exposure to ultra-thin images negatively impacts women's body esteem. The generally accepted theory is that girls and women engage in an upward contrast between themselves and an idealized and unrealistic female body type (Botta,

1999; Cattarin, Thompson, Thomas, & Williams, 2000; Cash, Cash, & Butters, 1983; Wilcox & Laird, 2000). This comparison leads to feelings of body shame and dissatisfaction, which may result from a glaring discrepancy between actual and ideal possible selves (Markus & Nurius, 1986) in the domain of physical appearance. An upward comparison process may indeed explain the way in which media icons contribute to negative body esteem, but it cannot account for the initial feelings of euphoric identification suggested by the previous quote. The lesser known and more recently studied phenomenon of upward assimilation (Collins, 1996) may clarify the positive feelings associated with attaching to images of ultra-thin female celebrities.

Assimilative comparisons manifest in an expansion of self-concept to incorporate the attributes of the comparison target (Gardner, Gabriel, & Hochschild, 2002). Rather than a comparison based on divergent characteristics, as in the case of contrast comparisons, assimilative comparisons are based on points of similarity between the self and the target in question. It follows, then, that the tendency to assimilate with a target should increase as perceptions of similarity increase. Indeed, researchers have found that the more people identify with and connect to an idealized other, the more likely they are to experience assimilation (Brewer & Weber, 1994; Brown, Novick, Lord, & Richards, 1992; Stapel & Koomen, 2000). Further, assimilation with such a target also is more likely to occur to the extent that people experience the target as less distinct from themselves (Stapel & Winkeilman, 1998) and to the extent that they are not explicitly primed to make self-other comparisons (Pelham & Wachsmuth, 1995). These conditions for assimilation appear to be met both by the relational styles of preoccupied individuals and by the ubiquitous mass media environment.

Women with a preoccupied attachment style are highly motivated to feel connected, or even merged, with an idealized close other (Brennan et al., 1998). They are also more likely to experience unstable or negative views of self (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Pietromonaco & Feldman Barrett, 1997). Both of these sets of variables, self-other overlap (Gardner et al., 2002) and mutable/negative self views (Pelham & Wachsmuth, 1995; Stapel & Koomen, 2000), have been associated with greater assimilation tendencies. Additionally, women, in contrast to men, may experience chronic activation of an interdependent perspective (i.e., greater connection between the self and others), which may be more likely to lead to assimilation than to contrast in social comparison (Gardner et al., 2002). This reasoning helps to explain why, in our research, women with a preoccupied attachment orientation were the most likely to report feelings of identification, closeness, and desire to be and look like favorite fictional characters. But how might the media context or situation also contribute to the initial stage of assimilation?

As we noted earlier, the mass media environment promotes blurred boundaries between self and idealized fictional others and uses the language of intimacy and identification to inspire commercial and appearance emulation. Thus, the stage seems to be set for preoccupied women to experience a positive physical

identification with a glamorous icon. Indeed, Wilcox and Laird (2000) applied the concept of identification, if not assimilation, with an idealized media image as the process by which a young woman may experience "at least a brief moment of pleasure as she imagines that she too is, or could be, as slim and attractive as the model" (p. 279). They also find that the identification process is more likely to occur when women are less attentive (vs. more attentive) to their own personal cues and emotions. This idea fits nicely with our application of upward assimilation to the domain of media and body image, suggesting that low self-distinctiveness leads to a more positive identification. Further, when people are transported or absorbed (Green & Brock, 2000) by a story or character, they are less likely to be tuned in to any potential discrepancies between the self and other.

But what happens when the television is turned off and personal distinctions become more salient? Once people are jolted back from the idealized images reflected by the fictional realm of television and magazines to their own images, reflected in bathroom or dressing room mirrors, the second sequence of media influence, namely, the contrast comparison processes, may be activated with demoralizing affects. As Lockwood and Kunda (1997) point out, one condition of assimilation is the perceived attainability of a comparison target's success on a relevant domain (e.g., physical appearance). Given that idealized images on television and in magazines are, more often than not, the result of personal chefs and trainers, cosmetic surgeons, and high-tech, airbrushing and photoshop techniques, these looks are, by their very definition, unattainable (Kilbourne, 2000). Thus, young women may be blatantly confronted with their own failure to measure up to media standards of beauty and feel a resulting body shame. Young women with a preoccupied attachment style may be particularly vulnerable to these feelings because they may be more likely to assimilate and idealize in the first place. As shown in our own study, women higher in preoccupation reported greater desire to look like their favorite female characters, a variable that, in turn, predicted higher levels of body shame and surveillance.

The idea that both assimilation and contrast processes may be elicited by exposure to the mass media may help reconcile a contradictory set of findings in the literature on media exposure and body dissatisfaction. On the one hand, Cash et al. (1983) found that women were more likely to negatively contrast their appearance with an attractive peer than an attractive model. On the other hand, Posovac et al. (1998) found that young women's body image was more threatened by an attractive model than an attractive peer. The former study explains the finding by noting that "perhaps in the eyes of most of our subjects, peer beauty qualified as a more appropriate standard for social comparison than professional beauty" (p. 354). The latter study however, points out that "to the extent that images depict extreme attractiveness, females are more likely to perceive a discrepancy between self and the ideal" (p. 199). We propose that these seemingly competing findings and explanations may be more similar than they appear. As described earlier, today's media invites us to consider otherwise inaccessible characters and images to

be our friends and thus fools us into an imagined intimacy or parasocial rapport. It is then likely that we may also begin to react to television icons as peers, who typically represent appropriate target comparisons for physical appearance. However, the fictional characters that surround us are inherently unrealistic comparison targets, destined to cause frustration and disappointment when we fail to match up. Thus, both assimilation and contrast comparisons may be implicated in individual women's perceptions of themselves in relation to idealized media figures.

Young women with a preoccupied attachment style, characterized by a desire to merge with an idealized other as well as an unstable view of themselves, may be the most adversely affected by media images. Because they may be the most driven to assimilate with an idealized female character, they may also be the most disillusioned when that imagined assimilation dissolves into very real contrast. The relational anxieties that permeate the personal lives of preoccupied women may not only fail to be resolved through a media relationship but may also be compounded by an increase in body anxiety. Understanding how a young woman's attachment style interacts with the parasocial reality of the mass media has great potential to clarify the media exposure to body dissatisfaction link. Future research should continue investigating the particular associations that emerge among attachment style, media perceptions, and body image concerns and continue examining the intricate interplay between individuals and their social environment.

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Marketing Through Sports Entertainment: A Functional Approach

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The central objectives of this chapter are to explore the factors that make sport a unique entertainment medium for marketing communications and to place the factors into a theoretical context. Sport is an important type of entertainment with some special characteristics that imply a need for a sophisticated understanding of how it operates psychologically. Sporting events are characterized by an inherent intensity that is central to its entertainment function, and the source of this intensity is the competition for a limited resource—winning. Sport fans seek to affiliate with teams and players characterized by associations that they view as desirable, such as winning. After addressing these issues, the chapter then turns to the unique psychological consequences derived through sport properties, such as compliance, identification, and internalization. Through this description of the sport product and sport fans, we focus on the reasons a company seeks to align with sport properties. Sponsorship, hospitality, endorsement, product placement, and the Internet are presented as tactics employed by marketing practitioners in an effort to market their product through sport.

THE UNIQUE NATURE OF THE SPORT PRODUCT

Sports are a compelling form of entertainment because of their unique nature. Sports products are “either the entertainment of competition or a product/service associated with the excitement of the event, or both” (Schaaf, 1995, p. 22). The

primary product of the sports industry is the sporting event (Shank, 1999). The sporting event may be distinguished as the primary product because all related products and services (e.g., licensed merchandise, stadium concessions, sponsorships, athletes) are contingent on the existence of the event.

A sporting event is characterized by a number of tangible and intangible features. The tangible features vary widely and include services ranging from food services to parking; however, the features that make the sporting event product unique are best described as intangibles. The appeal of the product rests on the uncertainty of the game's outcome, which can have a profound effect on the consumer who experiences sporting events as "a *hedonistic experience* [italics added] in which the event itself elicits a sense of *drama*" (Madrigal, 1995, p. 206).

The characterization of a sporting event as a hedonic experience is consistent with the research of Hirschman and Holbrook (1982). Hedonic consumption refers to the multisensory and emotive aspects of consumption. Sporting events provide multisensory images such as the sights, sounds, smells, and traditions of attending a live sporting event or watching the event on television. These multisensory images may be thought of as both historic and fantasy. For example, a person attending a Boston Red Sox game at Fenway Park may invoke historic memories of attending games as a child or entertain fantasies, such as how it may feel to witness the Red Sox's win a World Series, or both. In addition to the development of multisensory images, sporting events are sources of arousal of hedonic emotions, such as fear, hope, joy, and rage (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Holbrook (1980) posited that the search for emotional arousal is a major motivation for the consumption of sporting events.

Within the hedonic framework, the dynamic interaction between consumer and producer is especially important because the reaction of the audience can influence the performance (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Sport fans seek to enhance the perception that they are involved in the game's production. Further, fans may directly influence the outcome of the game by providing a hostile environment for one player or team (e.g., crowd noise, "getting inside an opponents head"). The research of Tutko and Richards (1971) supports the proposal that fans influence the emotions and motivations of players (Sloan, 1989). In this sense, sport fans play an important role by both attending and participating in the performance of a sporting event (Deighton, 1992).

Players, teams, and their fans share a common objective, a winning outcome; however, winning in sport is a limited resource. From the perspective of players and teams, just as many competitors fall short of the objective of winning as those who achieve it. From the perspective of the sport fan, the desire to associate with a winning outcome is a source for the hedonic components of the product. For example, the emotive aspects of the product reflect the highs and lows associated with winning and losing. Further, many of the multisensory fantasy images one may expect a sport fan to hold are related to successful on-field performance. Therefore, the competition for a successful outcome combined with the unscripted and

unpredictable nature of the outcome are key contributors to the drama associated with the sporting event product.

FANS SEEK TO AFFILIATE WITH SPORT HEROES AND PROPERTIES

Sport fans seek to affiliate with teams or players for a variety of reasons. For example, affiliation can be based on desirable associations that enhance self-concept or provide extrinsic rewards, such as public acknowledgment and support. Additionally, sport fans form associations as a result of their inherent beliefs about particular sports, teams, or players.

Kelman's (1958) functional theory recognizes three different levels of attitudinal motivations for affiliation: compliance, identification, and internalization. *Compliance* is the result of group or individual influence, in which case a sport fan gives in to influence because he or she gains rewards or avoids punishment. The second level of influence, *identification*, occurs when a fan wants to maintain or enhance his or her image through relationships with a sport hero or property. *Internalization* is the result of shared values and beliefs. In contrast to compliance and identification, it is more enduring and long term. We now consider each of these more carefully.

Compliance

Compliance is the least engaging level in functional theory (Kelman, 1961). In the context of sport, this influence could be the formation of affiliations with a particular sport, player, or team to gain public approval and acknowledgment. This influence could also result in a disassociation with a sport, player, or team to avoid negative consequences and public embarrassment. Due to the social nature of this influence, the individual is looking for a favorable reaction from another person or group. As the most superficial level of social influence, compliance-related change is only the result of public acknowledgment of the behavior. In this case, sport fans participate in this type of behavior (i.e., attend a game) because of their need for a favorable response, not necessarily because they truly believe or support the action. Additionally, this action will be exhibited only when the referent individual or group is present and observes the action (Kelman, 1958, 1974).

Compliance can have important implications for marketing. Much of the sport-centered hospitality aims to develop compliance into a marketing relationship. Often major corporations entertain clients at sporting events, hoping to use compliance in attendance as a vehicle to improve fan relationships (Kahle, Elton, & Kambara, 1997).

Identification

The desire to associate with winning is one reason why sport fans identify with sport properties. "While there are clearly aesthetic pleasures in merely watching a sport performance, the real intensity comes from identifying with an individual

or team as they strive to win" (Whannel, 1992, p. 200). Identification may be described as a psychological orientation of the self whereby individuals define themselves in terms of their group membership and derive "strength and a sense of identity" from the affiliation (Kelman, 1961, p. 64). Fans often view a team or a player as an extension of their self (Kahle, Duncan, Dalakas, & Aiken, 2001). It is this identification motive that often leads consumers to form psychological alliances with sport heroes and properties.

The desire to create an extension of the self through identification with a team or player provides a foundation for understanding many of the unique psychological processes associated with sport fans. Identification has been studied quite extensively in the context of sport fan affiliations. Studies have found that consumers of sport identify with their favorite teams and players to the extent that they attempt to proclaim affiliation even when they in no way had a hand in the team's success. Basking in Reflected Glory (BIRGing; Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, & Sloan, 1976) refers to the tendency of individuals to display a connection with a winning team. Further, research by Wann and Branscombe (1990) discovered that fans with low team identification were more apt to disassociate themselves from a losing team. Snyder, Higgins, and Stucky (1983) describe an image-protection tactic through which a low-identification fan disassociates from a losing team. The researchers labeled this phenomenon as Cutting Off Reflected Failure (CORFing). This finding is held as support for the fair weather fan phenomenon.

A sport fan, however, may identify with any player or team characterized by associations the fan views as positive. Although the literature cited to this point has focused on an identification with winning, other research has demonstrated that winning is not a required antecedent for identification. The research of Fisher and Wakefield (1998) suggests that fans may identify with an unsuccessful team or player. Fans of unsuccessful teams focus on aspects of the team that are beneficial for their view of the self and ignore information about the team's poor performance. This type of identification motive helps to explain the loyalty fans display for teams traditionally associated with poor on-field performance, such as the Chicago Cubs baseball team and a number of collegiate athletic programs. In this case, fans seek to identify with positive team associations, such as perseverance.

Sport fans who closely identify with a team or player display substantial involvement and may personalize a team victory or defeat. The research of Hirt, Zillmann, Erickson, and Kennedy (1992) demonstrated that game outcome significantly affected both subjects' current mood state and their self-esteem. Additionally, "game outcome influenced subjects' estimates of not only the team's future performance but also their own future performance on a number of tasks" (Hirt et al., 1992, p. 735).

Identification can also be extended from a player or team to involvement in a consumption community (Shoham & Kahle, 1996; Shoham, Rose, Kropp, & Kahle, 1997). People develop identification with communities built around sport, providing a basis of participating in their lives.

Internalization

Kelman (1958) proposes that the third motivational component, internalization, is the result of shared values (cf. Homer & Kahle, 1988; Kahle, 1983, 1996). Sport fan affiliation through internalization is the result of deeply held beliefs that match the sport property. The content of the association between the sport fan and team or player is important to the individual, and he or she then adopts the behavior because of this significance. Internalized behavior is the deepest level of motivation and is less likely to be influenced by extrinsic rewards and image. Sport fans demonstrating internalized motives may value characteristics of sport, such as beauty, teamwork, patriotism, and heroism. Internalized fans view themselves as part of the sporting world. In a sense, they are the most intense consumers.

In summary, the consumption of sporting events is a hedonic experience that involves the consumption of drama. Drama is derived through competition for a limited resource—a winning outcome. Just as teams and players strive to win, many sport fans seek to affiliate with players and teams with positive associations, such as competitive success. Using Kelman's (1958) framework, affiliation can occur at three different levels: compliance, identification, and internalization. Each level implies different mechanisms that have different psychological sources, different arousal conditions, and different attitude change procedures.

One attraction of this functional theory is that it provides a framework for understanding the relation between fan choices and the fundamental perspectives on psychological theory. Each of the three functions corresponds to one of the macro theories of psychology. The importance of rewards and punishments in compliance echoes reinforcement theory (Skinner, 1974) and classic behaviorism (Watson, 1913). Contemporary psychoanalytic theory has moved from the psychosexual motivations that Freud preferred to perspectives such as the identification theory of Erikson (1968). Humanistic theory emphasizes internalization, authenticity, and actualization as the driving forces behind values and behavioral choices (Kahle, 1983, 1996; Rogers, 1961). Functional theory underscores the situational utility of macromotivational theories and provides a framework for thinking about the motivations of fans.

Research

Some research evidence is consistent with the assumption that Kelman's model is applicable to sports marketing. Kahle, Kambara, and Rose (1996) developed a model based on Kelman's theory to understand student attendance at college football games. They found three major paths to attendance motivation, consistent with Kelman's theory. At the two lower levels (compliance and identification), however, they observed a division between internal and external motives. Obligation (internal or private) and compliance (external or public) were two separate motivational constructs at the first level. They were antecedents of an intervening construct, camaraderie. Identification also split into a public or external factor,

called identification with winning, and a private or internal factor, called seeking self-defining experiences.

These two constructs were antecedents of seeking a unique self-expressive experience. At the internalization level, internal or private and external or public are fused and inseparable. Thus, the three motives that surfaced as directly antecedent to the decision to attend a sporting event were named internalization; seeking a unique, self-expressive experience; and camaraderie. Each motive implies different marketing communication efforts.

CONSEQUENCES OF SPORT FAN AFFILIATION

There are several consequences of affiliation by sport fans. These consequences include influences on hostility, biased information processing, and symbolic consumption.

Sporting events may lead to increases in hostility and aggressive behavior. The research of Goldstein and Arms (1971) suggests that fans' hostility was higher after watching a football game, regardless of whether their team won or lost. Goldstein and Arms's results are consistent with more recent research that questions the efficacy of catharsis referring to the release of energy through either participation in or the observation of aggressive behavior (Bushman, Baumeister, & Stack, 1999).

Sport fan affiliation influences information processing. A norm that is posited to exist among sport participants and fans encourages the acceptance of personal responsibility and discourages the externalization of failure. Grove, Hanrahan, and McInman (1991) found support for this norm, leading the authors to conclude this attribution has two functions. First, it permits attributers to present themselves in a positive light, regardless of the outcome of the sporting event. Second, in the case of success, "such an attribution would imply that winning was due to a relatively stable factor that was under personal control" (p. 96).

Further, the consumption of such products characterized by hedonic benefits requires substantial mental activity on the part of the consumer (Hirschman & Holbrook, 1982). Consequently, dual-processing information models suggest that information related to sporting events has a greater likelihood of undergoing cognitive processing (Petty, Unnava, & Strathman, 1991). In turn, an attitude toward a team or player developed through central processing is highly stable and resistant to change.

A final consequence of affiliation considered here is symbolic consumption. A product, such as a sporting event and the related teams and players, provides consumers with more than just functional benefits (Gardner & Levy, 1955; Park, Jaworski, & MacInnis, 1986). Sporting events are a source of social symbols that may influence self-definition (Solomon, 1983). Self-definition has been proposed as an organizing construct through which ordinary consumption activities may be understood (Kleine, Kleine, & Kernan, 1993). This self-definition may refer to

consumers' image of their self-construct or what they envision as their idealized self. Sport fans use products such as licensed apparel, bumper stickers, and affinity credit cards as symbols of their affiliation with a team or player. This symbolic consumption assists in fostering a positive self-concept (Branscombe & Wann, 1991).

To this point the focus of this paper has been on the role of fans as consumers of the sporting event product; however, television companies and corporations each seek to benefit from affiliation with a given team or league extending the BIRG phenomena beyond sport fans. Perhaps the single largest cause of the growth of the professional sport industry has been television that enjoys a symbiotic relationship with sport. Sport helps to build television and other media audiences, whereas television exposure builds an audience for the sports industry (Wolfe, O'Sullivan, & Meenaghan, 1997). Television companies and sponsors help to enculturate the drama of sporting events within the lives of sport fans through a variety of marketing tactics, including game, player, and team promotions (Celsi, Rose, & Leigh, 1993; Shoham, Rose, & Kahle, 1998).

COMPANIES ALIGN WITH SPORT PROPERTIES

Companies seek to align themselves with sports properties for three primary reasons. First, sports properties deliver an attractive demographic. This demographic may be local, regional, national, or global. Minor league baseball and youth sport programs are examples of local outlets companies may use for local associations. On the opposite end of the spectrum, the Olympic Games and the Super Bowl provide global exposure for allying companies. For example, the organizers of the 2002 World Cup soccer tournament estimated that as much as half of the world's population viewed the championship game.

Further, the growth of women as spectators of sport has been significant in recent years. According to Burnett and Menon (1993), women account for roughly 40% of professional baseball, 39% of professional basketball, 37% of any racing event, 40% of golf, and 58% of skating event viewership. Although certain sporting events may be used to reach a large, heterogeneous demographic, many companies still use sport to target specific consumer segments. In this sense marketing through sporting events is much like magazine advertising; however, with sport the advertisement may include multimedia.

Second, companies associating themselves with sports properties often benefit from a rub-off effect. The associative network memory model (Anderson & Bower, 1973) proposes that knowledge is represented through a network of linked concept nodes that are strengthened each time two events occur together. Consequently, companies marketing through sport may encourage the development of associations between their brand and the associations of a given sport. In this sense, sport acts as an extrinsic cue (Olson & Jacoby, 1972), which may be used

to develop inferences regarding a product, brand, or company (Huber & McCann, 1982). These associations provide companies with the opportunity to link their brands with sports-related values, such as courage and accomplishment (Mael & Ashforth, 1995).

Third, sports properties provide companies and brands with marketing platforms that allow them to achieve strategic and tactical objectives. As Hunt and Morgan (1995, 1996) have argued, some firms enjoy superior financial performance because they currently occupy marketplace positions of competitive advantage resulting from a comparative advantage in resources. Once reached, however, this position of advantage is subject to constant attack as competitors seek to close the gap between themselves and the industry leader (Hunt & Morgan, 1995, 1996). "Resources that are not articulable, not observable in use, and not apprehensible are the longer-term sources of advantage" (Wright, 1994, p. 56). Because they depreciate relatively slowly and are extremely firm specific, the two most important intangible resources are company or brand image and reputation (Conner, 1991).

Consequently, when consumers develop associations with a brand through sport, the association may endure longer than other associations developed through promotion. By means of example, the alliance between Budweiser beer and the National Football League is an illustration of a company that has developed its association into a sustainable and distinct resource (Amis, Pant, & Slack, 1997). The alliance provides Budweiser with access to a large portion of their target market, including the coveted young male demographic. The brand's advertising campaigns tie in well with the multisensory images of American football. The exclusivity of the Super Bowl makes it a sponsorship agreement that is difficult to replicate. The unique historical conditions that have shaped the image (Barney, 1991) would render it very difficult, costly, and time-consuming for another beer company to match the association in the eyes of the consumer, even if Budweiser were to terminate its sponsorship (Bharadwaj, Varadarajan, & Fahy, 1993).

TACTICS FOR MARKETING THROUGH SPORT

Marketers use a variety of strategies and tactics to exploit alliances with sports properties. Marketers may align with leagues, teams, athletes, events, or fans, or align with all groups. Previous research has supported the idea that marketing through sport is an effective strategy. The five alliances most often developed between marketers and sport are sponsorships, hospitality, endorsements, product placement, and the Internet.

Sponsorships

Prior research has found sport sponsorship to increase brand affect and recall (Levin, Joiner, & Cameron, 2001), influence purchase intentions (Madrigal, 2000), and act as a vehicle for brand (re)positioning (Gwinner & Eaton, 1999). *Sponsorship* may include, but is not limited to, the right to use a logo, name, or trademark to

signify an association with a sporting event; the right to provide exclusive service to the event; and the right to conduct promotional activities, such as contests and advertising campaigns.

Two theories that have been applied to explain how marketing through sport may change consumer attitudes and beliefs are balance theory and the halo effect. Balance theory (Heider, 1958) envisions a triangular relationship between three elements: the endorser, the object of the endorsement, and the consumer. The theory specifies that people desire the relations between the three elements to be harmonious and that people may adjust their attitudes to achieve consistency (Lutz, 1991). For example, a belief is out of balance if a lowly valued object is linked with a highly valued object. In terms of sport sponsorship, companies hope that consumers will hold positive associations toward the sport, and, consequently, the consumer will form a positive attitude toward the company (Dean, 1999).

Further, in the case of sport sponsorship, once a link between the sponsoring company and the event has been created and a positive sentiment toward the event has resulted in a similar attitude toward the sponsor, a halo effect (Aronson, 1999) may then suggest to consumers that the sponsor's products are superior to those products of competitors (Dion & Berscheid, 1972). In the case of Olympic sponsors, achievement of a halo effect has been shown to require either a natural or interpreted perceptual fit between the sponsor's product or brand and the Olympics (Dean, 1999). Consequently, an effective way for a firm to increase perceived customer value is to exploit the halo effect and increase brand equity through an association with a sporting event, team, or player (Keller, 1993).

Hospitality

Hospitality in the context of sport is the provision of tickets, lodging, transportation, on-site entertainment, and special events for sponsors, clients, guests, and employees. Sporting events such as the Super Bowl, the NCAA men's Final Four, and the Daytona 500 auto race have become some of the largest social events in corporate America. Corporate use of sporting events is an important mechanism for relationship marketing and personal selling. For example companies may invite a potential client to attend a sporting event and use that time to develop a relationship or describe a product in detail that would not be tolerated during a regular sales call (Kahle et al., 1997). Few other marketing media allow communication on the personal level attained during the attendance of a sporting event. Additionally, the hospitality offered through sporting events provides companies with unique opportunities for compensating and rewarding employees.

Endorsements

Using sports figures as product endorsers has also been shown to be an effective marketing strategy. *Endorsement* is the use of a sport celebrity by a company to sell or enhance the image of the company, product, or brand. Product endorsement using sport celebrities has been found to impact attitude toward an advertisement

(Tripp & Jensen, 1994), increase the likelihood of consumers choosing a product or brand (Kahle & Homer, 1985; Kamins, Brand, Hoeke, & Moe, 1989), and increase the profitability of a firm (Agrawal & Kamakura, 1995). Product endorsements may be explicit ("I endorse this product") or implicit ("I use this product"). The use of athlete endorsements provides an opportunity for companies to associate with attributes not found in other types of celebrities. More specifically, winning, success, teamwork, and community are associations an athlete may offer that other forms of celebrity may not.

Product Placement

Product placement is also a popular strategy for marketing through sport. The users of products placed on television provide an implicit endorsement for the product. The research of Johar (1995) considers the development of false beliefs about a brand including "extrinsic sources, such as *brand usage* [italics added]" (p. 268). When consumers expend effort to process the implications of product placement, the strategy is likely to be more memorable than an explicitly stated endorsement (Slamecka & Graf, 1978). Consequently, when a consumer views an athlete or coach using a particular product, this implied endorsement might lead to greater recall of the brand.

The need to consider product placement strategies to capitalize on the association with sporting events is increasingly important given the technological advances of recent years. Products such as TIVO allows television viewers to omit commercials during taping. Thus, placing advertisements within the entertainment product itself is increasingly important. The search for new tactics for placing advertising within the sport product itself is evidenced by a recent boxing match featuring a casino's Web address painted on the back of one fighter (Borges, 2002).

Internet

The Internet and sports marketing connect quite naturally. The gross demographics within the United States are quite similar for these two communication methods, tending toward educated, affluent young males in each case (Kahle, Madrigal, Melone, & Szymanski, 1999; Kahle & Meeske, 1999). Sport fans often want detailed, specialized information immediately, and the Internet can fulfill that desire more quickly than any other mass medium. From fantasy leagues to individual athlete Web sites, from league information to details about esoteric sports (e.g., canoe polo), the Internet can provide extensive rules, statistics, descriptions, and participation opportunities.

LIMITATIONS OF MARKETING THROUGH SPORT AND SUMMARY

A discussion of the potential benefits associated with marketing through sport is not complete without an acknowledgment of some of the risk associated with the strategy. Companies seeking to associate with a sport property cannot be sure how

the target audience perceives the athlete, team, league, or specific event (Amis et al., 1997). This absence of control is an inherent risk when marketing through sport. For example, insensitive public remarks, an arrest, or a poorly organized event may prove detrimental to a closely associated sponsor. Additionally, companies seeking to align with specific teams or players run the risk of poor on-field performance, such as an extended losing streak, which can influence consumers' perception of the product. Further, the benefits of aligning with sport organizations are dependent on consumers establishing a link between the sporting event and the company. A link in the consumers' mind may not develop if the sponsorship or product placement goes unnoticed or the relationship does not make sense (McDaniel, 1999).

In summary, sporting events are characterized by an inherent intensity. The source of this intensity is the competition for a limited resource—winning. Sport fans seek to affiliate with teams and players characterized by associations they view as desirable. This affiliation with sport properties results in unique psychological consequences, such as compliance, identification, and internalization. Companies may benefit through an alliance with sport properties when positive associations that a consumer holds for the sport product are transferred to the company through their association. Sponsorships, hospitality, endorsements, product placement, and the Internet each represent effective tactics employed by marketing practitioners in an effort to market their product through sport.

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Sensation Seeking and the Consumption of Televised Sports

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One would be hard-pressed to find a form of entertainment that has blurred its lines with marketing more than spectator sports. Over the years, marketers have become increasingly adept at using athletes, arenas, scoreboards, race cars, blimps, and the ads aired between the action as platforms to promote their brands by targeting sports fans. For instance, in recent years the ads aired during the Super Bowl telecast have become as important to some viewers as the event itself. Likewise, sports properties and the networks that cover them have become brands unto themselves, which has helped to provide them with new streams of revenue through brand extensions (e.g., ESPNzone restaurants, *ESPN Magazine*) and licensed merchandise. Despite the proliferation of what has come to be known as sport marketing, relatively little is known about the psychology that draws audiences to televised sports. This chapter focuses on research dealing with the personality trait of sensation seeking, which is a consumer's individual need for stimulation, and how this might be a factor in audience preferences for viewing certain types of televised sports.

Telecasts of sporting events are one of the most ubiquitous forms of television programming, yet little systematic research has been conducted on the consumption of such entertainment media (Bryant & Raney, 2000). Some studies have suggested that preferences for viewing televised sports are a function of gender and the levels of violence and aggression in different events (Sargent, Zillmann, & Weaver,

1998). However, no theories have been tested that would explain gender-based preferences for sports telecasts. Zuckerman's (1994) sensation-seeking paradigm offers face validity in this context because the trait has been shown to account for variance in need for stimulation among men and women. Most audience research on the sensation-seeking paradigm on television viewing has conceptualized sports telecasts as a homogenous form of programming and has failed to link the trait with its consumption (cf. Hirschman, 1987; Perse, 1996; Potts, Dedmon, & Halford, 1996; Rowland, Fotts, & Heatherton, 1989; Schierman & Rowland, 1985). Previously, only one study in this area accounted for variance in the content of sports telecasts and found some association between adolescents' sensation-seeking levels and viewing coverage of hockey and football games (Krcmar & Greene, 1999). However, recent studies have revisited this tension in the literature, that regarding the relationship between respondents' sensation-seeking levels, estimates of viewing interest, and audience viewing behaviors. These findings and their implications are reviewed herein.

Shapiro (2001) noted that television ratings for all of the major professional sports leagues in North America have declined appreciably over the past decade. This trend has obvious economic implications to sports organizations and those companies who purchase broadcast rights from them or who buy advertising time during such telecasts. Major networks also use sports programming to promote their prime-time programming (Eastman & Otteson, 1994). Because the sports entertainment industry has become more vertically integrated (Stotlar, 2000), understanding the various psychological factors that influence consumption of televised sports should be every bit as important to sport management as understanding what drives attendance at events (cf. Laverie & Arnett, 2000; Madrigal, 1995; Wakefield, 1995). Moreover, Weaver (2000) argued that, given the increasingly specialized nature of television programming and subsequent audience fragmentation, the television industry would be wise to move beyond mere demographic analysis and consider other characteristics, such as personality traits, in analyzing content preferences of viewers.

Although personality research may prove beneficial to the (sport) media industry, it is equally important for scholars to develop a body of academic research on television audiences that is similar in scope to the literature on other forms of consumer behavior, such as sports participation (Bryant & Raney, 2000; Shrum, 1999). Sensation-seeking theory would seem to offer a potentially fruitful approach to begin examining audience penchants for viewing different spectator sports because research suggests it has application in terms of segmenting and targeting consumers for advertising and promotions (Leone & D'Arienzo, 2000; McDaniel, 2001; Palmgreen, Donohew, Lorch, Hoyle, & Stephenson, 2001). Moreover, the trait has demonstrated predictive validity in helping to explain consumer preferences for different types of media and sport participation (Goma'-I-Feixanet, 2001; Krcmar & Greene, 1999; Litle & Zuckerman, 1986; Schroth, 1994; Shoham, Rose, & Kahle, 1998; Zuckerman, 1994).

RESEARCH ON THE CONSUMPTION OF SPORT AND MASS MEDIA

Gender Differences in Enjoyment of Televised Sports

Research on group differences in sport media audiences has suggested that people perceive unique characteristics in televised sporting events and this significantly influences the variance in their viewing preferences and enjoyment (Bryant & Raney, 2000; Bryant, Comisky, & Zillmann, 1981; Gan, Tuggle, Mitrook, Coussement, & Zillmann, 1997; Sargent et al., 1998). For example, Sargent et al. (1998) had college students evaluate 25 sports on several descriptive dimensions and then used cluster analysis to identify nine categories of sports that they subsequently fit into three broad groupings: combative sports, stylistic sports, and mechanized sports. Combative sports were noted to involve direct physical contact between performers and were further characterized as either violent sports (e.g., football, ice hockey) or aggressive sports (e.g., basketball, soccer). Stylistic sports, on the other hand, were characterized as those emphasizing beauty and movement (e.g., figure skating, gymnastics, tennis). Mechanized sports were categorized on the basis of involving the use of tools (e.g., auto racing, golf).

Sargent et al. (1998) applied the typology of televised sports derived from the cluster analysis to study viewing preferences for three different categories by gender. They found that male participants reported a significantly greater level of enjoyment from viewing combative sports than did their female counterparts, and women reported enjoying stylistic sports to a greater degree than did men. Males also reported significantly greater preferences for mechanized sports than did females, but the former did not report enjoying them as much as they did combative sports. Thus, it would appear that college-age audiences may make certain distinctions between sporting events on the basis of the levels of violence and aggression involved, and this impacts their programming tastes. Although the researchers provided post hoc theoretical conjecture regarding the gender differences in their findings, no empirical evidence was offered to support their suppositions. Consequently, they called for further research involving the study of individual differences on older, nonstudent populations, to aid in understanding preferences for viewing televised sports as audiences mature.

Sensation Seeking and the Sport Consumer

Zuckerman (1994) defined sensation seeking as a biologically based characteristic that describes individuals' preferences for and willingness to seek out "varied, novel, and intense sensations and experiences" (p. 27). The sensation-seeking construct has been posited to exist within a broader trait, called impulsive sensation seeking (ImpSS), where impulsiveness and sensation seeking are argued to be interconnected (Zuckerman, 1994). Sensation seeking is part of a psychological paradigm dealing with an innate drive in humans to maintain optimum levels of stimulation (OLS) or arousal (OLA). According to Zuckerman (1994), people seek

out stimuli (such as media) with the appropriate arousal potential (i.e., ability to excite their nervous system). This process helps them to maintain a state that is most comfortable for them based on their individual needs, which can vary according to the biochemistry of their central nervous systems. Studies involving scaled measures of the trait have consistently found significant gender and age effects, which have been attributed to differences in testosterone levels (Zuckerman, 1994). Males tend to report higher levels of sensation seeking than females, and sensation seeking declines over the course of the life cycle in both sexes. Over the years, sensation seeking has proven to be one of the most prolific areas of personality research, and scaled measures of the trait have been found to predict a variety of leisure behaviors, including media use and sports participation (Zuckerman, 1994).

A number of studies have suggested that a consumer's choice of sports activities can be related to sensation seeking, especially those involving risky or so-called extreme sports, such as mountain climbing or skydiving (Goma'-I-Feixanet, 2001; Jack & Ronan, 1998; Shoham et al., 1998; Zuckerman, 1994). Likewise, participants in contact sports have been found to have significantly higher levels of sensation seeking compared with those who reported playing noncontact sports (Schroth, 1994). Although spectator sports may not provide the same arousal as actual participation, Zuckerman (1994) wryly suggested that "for millions of people the excitement of watching their teams compete is the greatest thrill they have except for sex" (p. 156). Likewise, Zillmann (1991, p. 112) argued that television viewing can be highly arousing, depending on the content. Nevertheless, the preponderance of sensation-seeking research on sports-related phenomena deals with participants and not spectators (Zuckerman, 1994). In one of the few studies on need for stimulation and sport fan behavior (in a nonmediated context), Mustonen, Arms, and Russell (1996) examined the relationship between the sensation-seeking trait and propensity for crowd violence in adult male respondents who attended hockey games. Based on samples from both Finland and Canada, they found a moderate positive relationship between sensation seeking and the estimated likelihood that study participants would engage in crowd violence. Such a finding does not generalize to (home) viewing of sports telecasts, however, because the consumption context is different in terms of arousal potential and environmental stimuli, such as crowd noise (cf. Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001). Nevertheless, it suggests that sensation seeking could be a trait associated with males who follow contact sports such as hockey in the same way it predicts participation in contact sports. However, the majority of sensation-seeking research on preferences for viewing televised sports has not accounted for the differences between event telecasts in terms of such factors as the variance in violent and aggressive content.

Audience Research and the Sensation-Seeking Personality

Weaver (2000) noted that the influence of personality characteristics on the uses and effects of mass media has been an important consideration of mass communication research for many years. Likewise, personality research has a long history in

marketing research as well (Haugtvedt, Petty, & Cacioppo, 1992; Kassarian & Sheffet, 1991). However, the main criticism of personality research in both the communication and marketing disciplines has been the general failure to position such work in a broader conceptual framework (Haugtvedt et al., 1992; Kassarian & Sheffet, 1991; Weaver, 2000). Consequently, there have been calls for programmatic research, whereby a trait (e.g., sensation seeking) is linked with a theoretical framework (e.g., OLS or OLA) to help understand relevant forms of consumer behavior, such as media use or content preferences (Haugtvedt et al., 1992; Kassarian & Sheffet, 1991; Weaver, 2000).

According to Zuckerman (1988), "sensation seekers prefer stimuli that . . . elicit strong emotional reactions" (p. 180). Given the characteristics of certain sporting events and the emotional dynamics of being an avid sports fan (cf. Cialdini, Borden, Thorne, Walker, Freeman, & Sloan, 1976), telecasts of athletic contests offer a relatively unique form of television programming that would seem to appeal to sensation seekers (Guttman, 1996). In addition to sports that involve violent and aggressive play, sports-related programming also provides drama that is not scripted, and the uncertainty of outcomes often serves to create suspenseful endings (Gan et al., 1997; Guttman, 1996).

In his review of research on television viewing and physiological arousal, Zillmann (1991) noted that televised sports have been found to significantly elevate viewers' arousal levels. More recent studies on sports fans have also found significant differences in their psychophysiological responses to mediated sport based on their level of involvement with an athlete or sports team. For example, Hillman, Cuthbert, Cauraugh, Schupp, Bradley, and Lang (2000) found subjects who were highly identified with a particular sports team exhibited significantly different physiological (i.e., heart rate and electrocortical) responses to photos of their favorite team compared with their responses to photos of a team that they didn't follow. Likewise, Bernhardt, Dabbs, Fielden, and Lutter (1998) reported finding significant changes in the testosterone levels of males who watched basketball and soccer contests as a function of whether or not their team won or lost (regardless of viewing the event in a mediated or nonmediated context). Other studies (cited in Zuckerman, 1994) have found the aforementioned types of physiological responses to be significantly related to the sensation-seeking trait, and this suggests that spectator sports may indeed provide a mechanism for fans to reach or maintain optimum stimulation levels. However, this notion warrants further investigation before such claims can be substantiated.

According to Perse (1996), the sensation-seeking paradigm offers media researchers a potentially valuable approach to understanding how and why people use television. Likewise, Krcmar and Greene (1999) argued that the trait could be the most relevant variable in investigating an audience's need for stimulation. In fact, a growing body of literature suggests that sensation seeking is significantly linked with audience preferences for certain types of television programs, while significantly influencing other viewing-related behaviors as well (Perse, 1996). For example, it has been reported that participants who exhibited higher levels

of sensation seeking tended to prefer music videos, daytime talk shows, comedy performances, action-adventure shows, and horror movies more than those characterized as low sensation seekers (Perse, 1996; Potts et al., 1996; Schierman & Rowland, 1985). On the other hand, low sensation seekers were found to prefer newscasts and dramas to a greater degree than high sensation seekers (Potts et al., 1996). In addition, high sensation seekers tended to view ritualistically, engage in other tasks while viewing, and change channels more often than those exhibiting lower levels of the trait (Conway & Rubin, 1991; Perse, 1996; Potts et al., 1996; Rowland et al., 1989; Schierman & Rowland, 1985).

One potential limitation of existing sensation-seeking research on media preferences has been the fairly inconsistent classification of television content in most studies. For instance, researchers have distinguished between: situation comedies and stand-up comedies (Potts et al., 1996), dramas and soap operas (Perse, 1996), westerns and detective shows (Hirschman, 1987), and morning, daytime, and evening talk shows (Rowland et al., 1989). However, almost all of the previous research in this area has treated sports as a singular (homogenous) form of television programming. Meanwhile, other sport media research has suggested audiences perceive significant differences in levels of violence, aggression, and suspense in different event telecasts (cf. Bryant et al., 1981; Gan et al., 1997; Sargent et al., 1998). The failure to account for the variance in arousal potential of sports telecasts could explain why most of the studies in this area have not found a link between sensation seeking and preferences for viewing such content (cf. Hirschman, 1987; Perse, 1996; Potts et al., 1996; Rowland et al., 1989).

There is evidence to suggest that artificially limiting media content categories has been problematic in sensation-seeking research examining peoples' preferences for other types of media, such as music. For example, Zuckerman (1988) contended that the null findings of Glasgow and Cartier's (1985) study of the relationship between sensation seeking and music preferences were due to the latter researchers limitation of their study to classical music and to only two dimensions related to arousal. In a subsequent study, Litle and Zuckerman (1986) used a variety of music categories and found sensation seeking to be significantly related to preferences for certain music, such as rock and roll, which has the potential to arouse listeners. Their results also indicated that the trait was negatively related to liking other categories, such as Muzak, which tends to be more tranquil. Consequently, it seems plausible that previous studies examining sensation seeking and preferences for viewing televised sports may have been limited by some of the same issues noted by Litle and Zuckerman. The null findings concerning sports content may have been attributable to a lack of content specificity, which obscured the trait's influence on preferences for viewing coverage of certain types of events. Just as categories of music can differ in terms of their properties and subsequent potential to arouse listeners, different sporting events can also vary in terms of the levels violence or aggression involved (e.g., ice hockey vs. skating). And the violent or aggressive attributes of certain sports have been found to differentially

attract and stimulate audiences of televised sport (cf. Bryant et al., 1981; Gan et al., 1997; Sargent et al., 1998).

To date, the only work that has examined the association between sensation seeking and consumption of different types of sports telecasts has been that of Krcmar and Greene (1999). They investigated the relationship between the four individual subscales of the 40-item sensation-seeking scale (SSS form V) and self-reports of adolescents' exposure to coverage of events that were classified as either contact sports (using football and hockey as exemplars) or noncontact sports (using tennis and golf as exemplars). They found that the experience-seeking (ES) subscale was negatively related to male respondents' exposure to both contact and noncontact sports, with the disinhibition (DIS) dimension being positively related to the former type of programming. They also found that boredom susceptibility (BS) was the only subscale (negatively) related to viewing (contact) sports for females in the study.

Krcmar and Greene (1999) provided preliminary support for the notion that the sensation-seeking trait is related to viewing certain televised sporting events. However, it is important to note that their study did not examine the relationship between the global sensation-seeking construct and sport viewing preferences. Instead, the four subscales of the SSS form V were used individually and the reliabilities for two of them (ES and BS) were reported to be below $\alpha = .65$ (Krcmar & Greene, 1999, p. 30). These results are similar to those of Ridgeway and Russell (1980), who previously noted concerns over the reliability levels of the individual subscales. In addition, Krcmar and Greene (1999) were limited in terms of the variety of sports programming content that was covered because the study did not include what Sargent et al. (1998) termed *violent aggressive sports*, such as basketball or soccer. Likewise, it did not include *stylistic sports*, such as gymnastics and figure skating, which are among the most popular spectator sports for women. Despite these arguable limitations, however, Krcmar and Greene's (1999) findings suggest that research investigating the link between sensation seeking and audience interest in viewing televised sports should not treat such programming as a homogenous form of content. Consequently, the varying degree to which different types of televised sporting events might appeal to audience segments (e.g., adult males or females) based on their optimum levels of stimulation was an area that warranted further examination.

RECENT RESEARCH ON SENSATION SEEKING AND CONSUMPTION OF TELEVISED SPORTS

Building on the work of Sargent et al. (1998) and Krcmar and Greene (1999), a recent study found significant a relationship between sensation seeking and interest in viewing certain types of televised sports (McDaniel, 2002). The study focused on the two categories of sports telecasts found to be most popular with

male (combative sports) and female (stylistic sports) viewers in previous studies (Sargent et al., 1998).

Participants in the study ($n = 305$) indicated their viewing interest for event telecasts, using 5-point single-item scales. For example, NHL hockey, NFL football, NCAA Division I College football, and professional wrestling were all grouped into the violent-combative sports category. Likewise, the aggressive-combative sports category consisted of different types of men's and women's basketball (i.e., NCAA, NBA, and WNBA), and these scores were compiled to create an interest index for viewing that type of telecast as well. Reported interest levels for watching telecasts of figure skating, gymnastics, and men's and women's professional tennis were combined to create a viewing interest index for coverage of stylistic sports. The 19-item Impulsive Sensation Seeking scale (ImpSS) from the larger Zuckerman-Kuhlman Personality Questionnaire (ZKPQ) was used to gauge sensation seeking (cf. Zuckerman, 1994).

Consistent with previous research (cf. Kcmar & Greene, 1999), McDaniel (2002) used separate hierarchical regression analyses to examine the unique influence of ImpSS levels on viewing interest for each of the sport typologies. These analyses were run separately for men and women, while controlling for respondents' age, race, and enduring involvement (Zaichowsky, 1994) with spectator sports. The results suggest that reported levels of interest in viewing violent combative sports were a significant ($p < .05$) positive function of impulsive sensation seeking for both male and female participants. Moreover, interest in viewing telecasts of stylistic sports was found to be a significant ($p < .05$) negative function of the trait for females. However, ImpSS was not significantly ($p > .05$) related to interest in viewing aggressive-combative sports for either sex, nor was it related to interest in viewing stylistic sports for males.

In addition to examining the relationship between viewing interest and sensation seeking, the study also examined the relationship between ImpSS and parasocial interaction during consumption of spectator sports. *Parasocial interaction* has been defined in the communication literature as an interaction between media characters and audience members (Rubin & McHugh, 1987). McDaniel (2002) queried respondents as to whether they yelled at players, coaches, officials while watching televised sporting events. Analysis of variance suggested that those respondents who reported engaging in parasocial viewing reported significantly ($p < .05$) higher levels of estimated arousal while watching televised sports than those who reported not participating in such viewing behavior. Not surprisingly, the former group also found reported significantly ($p < .05$) higher mean levels of ImpSS than the latter group of respondents.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE SENSATION-SEEKING SPORTS FAN

The results of McDaniel (2002) departed from most of the previous studies on sensation seeking and the consumption of televised sports, which have not linked

the trait with viewing televised sports (cf. Hirschman, 1987; Perse, 1996; Potts et al., 1996; Rowland et al., 1989). McDaniel's (2002) findings are in line with those of Krcmar and Greene (1999), who found sensation seeking was related to viewing certain types of sporting event telecasts in high school and college audiences. Thus, it appears that audience preferences for televised sports may vary by personality and subsequent need for stimulation, similar to what has been found for other types of television programming (cf. Krcmar & Greene, 1999; Litle & Zuckerman, 1986; Perse, 1996; Potts et al., 1996; Rowland et al., 1989).

The findings reported by McDaniel (2002) are consistent with other sports media research, which has found that men and women differ significantly in terms of their proclivity for viewing televised events involving violent or aggressive content (Bryant et al., 1981; Sargent et al., 1998). Men reported significantly greater interest in viewing violent sports than women, and patterns of mean viewing interest were reversed concerning stylistic sports (McDaniel, 2002). It is still unclear when these preferences are formed, however, and if or how they change over the course of the life cycle (Sargent et al., 1998). Therefore, future research should attempt to add to the knowledge base in this area because this would inform the sport media literature and add to our overall understanding of the consumer behavior of sports fans.

McDaniel's (2002) findings support Weaver's (2000) contention that audience research should employ both group and individual difference measures when determining preferences for unique forms of programming, such as sports telecasts. The relationships between sensation seeking and interest in viewing violent and stylistic sports are also consistent with the notion of maintaining optimum levels of stimulation through media use (Zuckerman, 1988). Although reported interest in viewing violent aggressive sports, such as basketball, was not related to sensation seeking for men or women in the study, McDaniel found that the trait was positively related to interest in viewing violent combative sports for both sexes. Mean ImpSS scores were also found to be negatively related to interest in viewing the least violent type of sports (i.e., stylistic) for women. Therefore, the research does not tend to support sensation-seeking theory as an explanation for the gender-based differences in mean sports-viewing interest. The directionality of the relationships between ImpSS and women's interest in viewing violent combative and stylistic sports seems counterintuitive because they are significantly more interested in the former than the latter. The positive relationship between females' ImpSS levels and their interest in viewing violent combative sports also runs counter to the results of Krcmar and Greene (1999). However, McDaniel's findings concerning violent combative sports are similar to studies that have found significant positive relationships between scores on the SSS Form V and reported enjoyment of X-rated movies and horror films for both sexes (Litle & Zuckerman, 1986; Schierman & Rowland, 1985; Sparks, 1984, cited in Zuckerman, 1994).

Although McDaniel's (2002) results do not support sensation seeking as an explanation for gender-based differences in preferences for televised sports, they do not discount the potential value of such research in terms of promoting consumption of televised sports. For example, other research has suggested that the

trait has use in terms of targeting audiences (cf. Palmgreen et al., 2001). Therefore, we could extrapolate from his research on sports audiences and previous research on sensation seeking's impact on other aspects of audience behavior. This might help in targeting audiences of different sporting events with ads promoting other programming by mentioning prime-time shows or specials that are consistent with the OLS/OLA levels associated with the genre being promoted. For example, violent sports such as hockey and football telecasts could be used as media vehicles to target high sensation-seeking viewers with promotions for stand-up comedy programs or animated cartoons (cf. Potts et al., 1996). Mentioning television programs and sponsors within the telecasts of violent sporting events might also be a prudent strategy in light of research that has suggested viewers of these events (i.e., high sensation seekers) tend to channel surf (cf. Conway & Rubin, 1991; Perse, 1996; Potts et al., 1996; Rowland et al., 1989; Schierman & Rowland, 1985). Thus, they are less likely to see traditional advertising.

In addition to using sensation-seeking research in targeting sports audiences, broadcasters and advertisers might also use such information in designing their advertisements to make them more consistent with the type of programming in which it will run. For example, research has suggested that the trait is positively related to people's enjoyment of novel and complex imagery and rock music (Little & Zuckerman, 1986; Zuckerman, 1994). Therefore, airing commercials that use intricate imagery (e.g., quick cuts) and driving music (e.g., hard rock) might be an effective approach to promoting sports such as hockey or football because appreciation for these types of media have also been positively associated with sensation seeking (Zuckerman, 1994).

Another difference between the current study and others on this topic is that it is the only work on audience preferences for televised sports to account for the notion of media affinity, through the use of the Zaichowsky (1994) Personal Involvement Inventory (PII). The involvement construct turned out to be the most influential predictor of viewing interest in almost all genres for respondents of both sexes, which is in line with the results of Conway and Rubin (1991). In addition, McDaniel (2002) departed from most work in this area, as did Krcmar and Greene (1999), by attempting to account for the differences in arousal potential between sports telecasts in terms of violent and nonviolent content (cf. Hirschman, 1987; Perse, 1996; Potts et al., 1996; Schierman & Rowland, 1985). Finally, the sample consisted of a broader age cohort than some of the previous work in this domain, which has tended to employ samples who were college-age or younger (cf. Krcmar & Greene, 1999; Potts et al., 1996; Schierman & Rowland, 1985). Consequently, future research in this area should attempt to add to our understanding of preferences for televised sport and whether such penchants (and the factors that affect them) vary over time as viewers mature (Sargent et al., 1998).

McDaniel (2002) was intentionally constrained to some of the most popular forms of combative and stylistic sports to avoid potential confounds presented by other types of events. Consequently, no mechanized sports were included in the

study because sports such as golf and racing have very different dynamics and arousal potential (McDaniel, 2002). However, it is possible that sports such as auto racing could be attractive to sensation seekers, given the potential for accidents and even fatalities (Litle & Zuckerman, 1986). Moreover, boxing was not examined in the study as part of the violent-combative sports category nor were baseball and soccer listed among the other aggressive-combative sports. Therefore, replications of McDaniel's study should include a broader variety of sports programming content (or focus on individual sports that were not represented). In addition, the potential influence of culture or geographic location should also be a consideration in future studies in this area because tastes for media stimuli, such as sport (or music), might differ as a result of ethnic or regional influences (cf. Hirschman, 1982). Because the arousal potential of media content might differ as a function of personal relevance, a broader array of sports programming (e.g., soccer or rugby) should be included in studies outside the United States to examine this phenomenon in other settings.

In conclusion, the results of McDaniel (2002) support the notion that accounting for differences in certain types of media content, such as televised sports, is important to sensation-seeking research on media preferences (cf. Litle & Zuckerman, 1986; Zuckerman, 1988). Broad media genres do not adequately capture differences in stimulus intensity/arousal potential, such as violence and aggression. Therefore, future studies in this area need to better account for such differences in programming within certain television genres, like those examined here. Moreover, consumer behavior research should also endeavor to examine the influence of sensation seeking in the context of live sporting events because stadium viewing exposes spectators to potentially arousing environmental stimuli that are quite different from watching television at home (Bernhardt et al., 1998; Wann et al., 2001; Zuckerman, 1994). This line of inquiry would not only add to the research literature on the consumption of sporting events but also increase the understanding, which could ultimately prove beneficial in promoting mediated spectator sports and their sponsors.

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Nazi Cinema as Enchantment

The Politics of Entertainment in the Third Reich



MARY-ELIZABETH O'BRIEN

Nazi Cinema as Enchantment

Studies in German Literature, Linguistics, and Culture

Edited by James Hardin
(*South Carolina*)

Nazi Cinema as Enchantment

The Politics of Entertainment in the Third Reich

Mary-Elizabeth O'Brien

CAMDEN HOUSE

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For my husband, Joseph Chautard

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M.-E. O
Saratoga Springs, New York
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Introduction

THE CINEMATIC EXPERIENCE has often been compared to a dream. As we sit in the dark and allow uncontrollable images, sounds, and sensations to waft over us, we submit ourselves to someone else's dream, someone else's vision of reality. Working perhaps best on the emotional, non-cognitive level, film can transport us in an oneiric state to a simpler world where we need not, indeed cannot, participate physically in the events taking place before our eyes. Bystanders yielding to a communal fantasy, the audience safely maneuvers the dangers and pleasures of the cinema, assured of returning to the light of day unscathed. Akin to the national obsession with ecstatic subordination, the cinematic experience in the Third Reich offered the masses submission through entertainment. The National Socialist regime considered film's power to persuade and placate crucial to its cause and went to extraordinary lengths in an attempt to control celluloid dreams.

Between 1933 and 1945, the German motion picture industry produced over a thousand entertainment films and a vibrant cinema culture, captivating audiences with penetrating images, compelling stories, and a glamorous star cult. Although the National Socialist government considered film a vital indoctrination tool and instituted measures to regulate all aspects of film-making, it also recognized that the most effective propaganda hides its intentions and appeals to the emotions. Feature films that catered to the needs of a mass audience and were promoted as ideology-free consumer products could function as political vehicles by teaching behavioral modes, nourishing the demand for a private realm, and granting subversive desire a measured release. Nazi entertainment films sought to influence viewers via the conventions of classical cinema: emotional involvement, identification with characters and stars, and well-worn genres. The Nazi regime did not merely terrorize its citizens into submission, it also used seduction and offered people many of the things they wanted: stability, a traditional value system, a sense of belonging, and the belief in a better standard of living. Much of Nazi cinema's popularity rested upon its ability to express positive social fantasies and promote the enchantment of reality, creating a place so delightful that one wanted to share in the dream at any price.

I use the term "the enchantment of reality" here to denote how a motion picture can attract and move spectators so deeply that it influences them without their conscious knowledge. In the Third Reich, this process was orchestrated to achieve concrete political goals. The propaganda ministry

promoted stirring motion pictures because it believed that intense emotional involvement could alter the audience's *perception* of the world so radically that it *felt* as if reality had changed. Transported by ardent emotions that filtered reality and made it more appealing, the audience could be motivated to accept that whatever transpired in everyday life was irrelevant as long as they felt satisfied. Moreover, if roused to ecstasy, a state beyond reason and governed by profound feelings, viewers could be provoked to frenzied action.

The enchantment of reality operating in Nazi cinema and society fulfilled a profound hunger for emotional gratification and moral certitude, and should be examined within the context of the larger ideological debates surrounding the crisis of modernity. Already during the First World War, notable German philosophers observed that modernity had drained the world of spirituality, fervor, and ethical direction. Siegfried Kracauer, for example, lamented in his essay, "On Experiencing War" (1915), that the average German had recently enjoyed material gains but was suffocating in a sterile environment devoid of meaning. In the decade preceding the war, "there was," according to Kracauer, "precious little that bound people together, and not just bound them together, but also stirred their highest will. Politics often repelled, was petty, and taken care of by a minority; art satisfied only individual, isolated parts of the soul." Kracauer continued, "Above all, the most important needs of the soul, the religious, lay fallow: there was no living, universally binding belief corresponding to our essence that could have expressed it."¹ Without a stable belief system capable of unifying the community, the masses embraced war as a guiding principle. War liberated such pent-up sentiments as "the sense of duty, the joy of being in agreement with the community, the numbing rapture gleaned from the mood of the masses, the adventurous impulse, the pleasure in smashing things up, ambition, curiosity," and channeled these feelings into a meaningful framework that satisfied individual needs and guaranteed social cohesion. The sacrifices war demanded were inherently part of its appeal because: "it is the most natural condition for men to serve ecstatically the purpose of an ideal. Even the smallest action becomes sacred and the sense of life endlessly exalted."²

Kracauer's analysis corresponds to the prevalent view of modernity as a shattering of foundations, a soulless age bereft of meaning. While Kracauer saw modernity as one of the main forces behind the war, other theorists argued in broader terms. They suggested that modern science had a profound effect on the collective consciousness. Key among these distinguished thinkers was Max Weber, who delivered his celebrated lecture on "Science as a Vocation" on November 7, 1917, at the Munich University.³ Weber stated: "The fate of our times is characterized by rationalization and intellectualization and, above all, by the 'disenchantment of the world.' Precisely the ultimate and most sublime values have retreated from public life either into the transcendental realm of mystic life or into the brotherliness of direct

and personal human relations.”⁴ Weber maintained that in earlier times man believed that supernatural forces governed the world and human events, and made them meaningful. Life was informed by an overarching principle that ordered everything. As man applied instrumental reason to his environment and came to believe he could master everything by calculation, he experienced a progressive loss of wonder. Weber concludes: “As intellectualism suppresses belief in magic, the world’s processes become disenchanting, lose their magical significance, and henceforth simply ‘are’ and ‘happen’ but no longer signify anything. As a consequence, there is a growing demand that the world and the total pattern of life be subject to an order that is significant and meaningful.”⁵ As Weber demonstrates, science can answer many questions about how things work, but it can never address the greater ontological and religious questions of why we exist or what is sacred. Confronted by conflicting and man-made value systems, the individual is left adrift in an ethically ambiguous universe.

The disenchantment Max Weber associated with modernity permeated much of German cultural life in the aftermath of the First World War. The Weimar Republic failed in the end not only as a political system but as an ideal because it did not offer the broad public a satisfying emotional life and moral anchor, neglecting to address the widespread need for security, pride in oneself and one’s country, communal happiness, and a sense of belonging to something higher than the individual. Germany’s first experiment with democracy and pluralism, while engendering an exhilarating culture capable of supporting such varied artists as Thomas Mann and Bertolt Brecht, Arnold Schönberg and Richard Strauss, Max Beckmann and Walter Gropius, never managed to foster a communal sense of well-being and quell the pervasive yearning for what Peter Gay has called “the hunger for wholeness.”⁶

National Socialism promised to fill the void by re-enchanting the world, recapturing the sense of wonder, wholeness, and authenticity previously attained through religion and shattered by modernity. Although the Nazi regime tried to control its citizens through coercion and the threat of violence, it also appreciated that a frightened, unsatisfied public was a potential threat to the movement. Working from the premise that it would need both the carrot and the stick, the government spent considerable energy organizing cultural life and the entertainment industry. Providing its citizenry with amusement was fundamental to the regime, not just because it quieted discontent and distracted the masses from those things they did not want to see. Recreation served a political goal because it could rejuvenate workers and revive their energy for further labor. Most importantly, entertainment would allow viewers to express and experience emotions collectively through fantasies that infused life with the magic and sentiment long associated with religion and the pre-modern world. The film industry in particular seemed tailor-made to the National Socialist agenda. Motion pictures create a mo-

mentary world in fleeting images and sounds, but they have tenacious staying power, lingering in the heart and mind long after the screen fades to black.

Enchantment as practiced by National Socialism is heavily dependent on intense emotional involvement. Precisely because emotions are non-rational and subjective, they do not require explanation. One simply feels the rightness of an event or a relationship, and this sentiment functions as a moral compass to evaluate the world and establish a point of orientation. The underlying principles of classical cinema, identification with characters and stars, emotional attachment and affective involvement in narrative outcomes, and the ability to transform reality through a sense of magic and make-believe all contributed to the enchantment of reality essential to the success of National Socialism. In his groundbreaking study, *The Ministry of Illusion* (1996), Eric Rentschler aptly states, "Film theorists have often speculated about the ideological effects of the 'dominant cinema,' proposing that classical narratives seek to mesmerize and mystify viewers by means of imaginary seductions. The Nazi cinema offers a strikingly concrete example of such a theoretical construct put into practice."⁷ Rentschler's analysis initiated a paradigm shift in the study of Nazi cinema by recognizing the complex web of connections between filmic conventions and political ideology. This shift in focus is well under way, but more research is warranted into the ideological underpinnings of classical cinema, which structures narratives and organizes the ways in which audiences come to understand not just the events unfolding up on the screen but also the world as a meaningful story. The primary aim of my book is to look at the ways in which genre cinema contributes to this project of enchanting the world, suffusing it with meaning and developing and reinforcing a value system that harmonizes with the totalitarian state's political program.

What most distinguishes this study from other recent works is that it analyzes the politics of entertainment through enchantment and focuses on genre rather than on individual films. It presents for the first time detailed archival research on five popular film genres that helped define a shared visual culture in Nazi Germany. Although the films examined in this book were blockbusters and significant historical artifacts, none are available in commercial release with English subtitles and four are only accessible to scholars in rare 35mm prints at German archives. Readers will be introduced to a variety of rare and remarkable motion pictures that reveal the spirit of their time and deserve closer critical attention.

Genre films draw on a system of conventions structured according to cultural values. Genres are recognizable formulas for talking about basic human experiences, and while they are open to almost limitless variation, they function because audiences already know the story. Working with time-worn plots that guarantee predictable results, genre films embody society's deep-rooted values in what Barry Keith Grant has called "secular myths."⁸ Nazi cinema relied on such commonplace narratives as the adventure film

about a hero who triumphs after countless struggles or the romantic comedy about starry-eyed youngsters who find true love, laying claim to the basic fairytale morality that the righteous will be rewarded and the wicked punished. German war films and melodramas likewise recount difficult moral lessons that are nonetheless appealing because they give meaning to loss in predictable ways. These genres reassure audiences that those who die a tragic death, like the soldier defending his country, or who suffer the cruel loneliness of unfulfilled love, like the mother who sacrifices her own happiness for her children's sake, achieve immortality because they remain true to universal, noble sentiments. Because genre films are based on familiar outlines shaped by collective memories and a common cultural heritage, they produce "a regulated variety of cinema, a contained and controlled heterogeneity" and are uniquely suited to an investigation of how ideology and social values interact in the realm of popular culture.⁹ In this book, I examine five film genres — the historical musical, the foreign adventure film, the home-front film, the melodrama, and the problem film — because they enact shared stories that can tell us much about how the family, war, history, nation, and community were imagined in Nazi Germany.

Movie stars play a substantial role in perpetuating genre cinema because they bring society's secular myths to life and provide identification opportunities. Stars serve as "political and psychological models who demonstrate some quality that we collectively admire."¹⁰ In the Third Reich, the major studios and the propaganda ministry abundantly supported the star system because they recognized the economic, psychological, and ideological value in the audience's propensity to identify with celebrities. Since the motion picture industry continued to be profit-driven despite the government's zealous oversight, stars were a necessary advertising tool to sell films and ideas. Popular actors like the steely hero Willy Birgel, the sophisticated Gustaf Gründgens, and fatherly Heinrich George, along with vamp Zarah Leander, self-reliant Brigitte Horney, and girl-next-door Ilse Werner fulfilled audience expectations by behaving in familiar ways and by possessing personality traits and physical attributes the audience sought to emulate.¹¹ I focus attention on the stars who populate genre films and investigate their image in fan magazines, because these popular types reflect a compelling, broad-based social fantasy and resolute value system.

My interest in genre films is not limited to their ability to develop and reinforce values and behavioral patterns; it is also predicated on how they operate within the totalitarian state. Although Adolf Hitler wanted to incite a revolution of mammoth proportions and radically alter German everyday life to conform to his vision of a racially pure Aryan community of physically fit, hardworking, and self-sacrificing citizens, he recognized that the masses wanted security and a sense that they could still enjoy a politically free zone of leisure and privacy.¹² As film historian Klaus Kreimeier has recently noted,

“Genre cinema functioned for twelve years as an advocate for the little people, their everyday worries and commonplace wishes, their security demands, their notion of happiness, their ‘petty escapes’ and, above all, their need for normality.”¹³ Continuing to go to the movies to watch familiar stories with expected outcomes helped sustain the totalitarian state because it contributed to the widespread belief that National Socialism would not intrude upon the individual’s right to find leisure in his own way. The sense of certainty and permanence provided by genre films reassured audiences that a stable, ordinary, and secure world continued to exist outside the movie theater — despite all rational evidence to the contrary.

Scholars in Germany and the United States have generally studied German film texts as discrete units and have failed to situate them within a regulated discursive system that included studio advertisement campaigns, the trade press, fan magazines, and star promotions. In this book, I appraise these long-neglected Nazi-era artifacts, including articles from the propaganda ministry’s official organ, *Der deutsche Film*, daily trade sheets *Licht-Bild-Bühne* and *Film-Kurier*, fan magazines *Filmwelt* and *Filmwoche*, and studio press packages for individual stars and motion pictures. These texts present a fascinating and largely unexplored aspect of cinema in the Third Reich and shed light on the limitations of censorship in the totalitarian state. Although Joseph Goebbels forbade film criticism (*Kritik*) in 1936 and required reviewers to provide mere descriptive reports (*Berichte*), one encounters a surprising array of conflicting opinions on specific films and lively debates on fundamental issues such as realism and audience identification.

As early as 1933, the National Socialist state began to institute measures to organize all aspects of the film industry — from finance, distribution, advertisement, and critique to the choice of material, cast, crew, and directors. The first step was the creation of the Reich Ministry for Popular Enlightenment and Propaganda on March 11, 1933. The writer Dr. Paul Joseph Goebbels was appointed propaganda minister by presidential decree and empowered to direct the entire cultural production of the nation. Joseph Goebbels quickly established a complex bureaucracy to oversee the film industry. Within the propaganda ministry, the film department censored and rated films, while a separate entity, the Reich Film Chamber, regulated economic issues and membership in the profession. The Reich Film Chamber, founded on July 14, 1933, and integrated into the Reich Culture Chamber on September 22, 1933, was a trade organization for everyone involved in filmmaking. It consisted of ten departments with Propaganda Minister Goebbels as president. Actors, cameramen, writers, directors, stage designers, and editors were all legally required to apply for membership in the Reich Film Chamber as a prerequisite for continued employment. Only racially “pure” Aryan applicants were granted membership; as of July 1, 1933, Jews had been expelled from the film industry.

Along with limiting access to the profession, the regime sought financial control of film projects. In the years 1933 to 1937, the Film Credit Bank played a substantial role in financing motion pictures in Germany. Legally established as a limited liability company on June 1, 1933, the Film Credit Bank was able to finance up to 70% of a film, and since it provided the majority of funds, it exercised considerable control over a film's production schedule and content. The Film Credit Bank was promptly incorporated into the Reich Culture Chamber, so that the government could supervise a film's economic and ideological development. With the gradual and mostly covert nationalization of the film industry between 1937 and 1942, the state took on a more rigorous role in managing the film industry. In 1937, under the direction of Max Winkler, the holding firm Cautio-Treuhandgesellschaft GmbH began secretly to purchase stocks in the four largest film companies: Ufa, Tobis, Terra, and Bavaria. By January 10, 1942, the entire film industry was consolidated into the Ufa-Film GmbH, better known as "Ufi," which was then incorporated into the Reich Culture Chamber. The Nazi regime thereby effectively governed film production, distribution, and exhibition.

The most far-reaching measure instituted to control film production was the Reich Cinema Law of February 16, 1934, which created a new rating system, expanded censorship, and inaugurated the office of the Reich Film Dramaturge within the film department of the propaganda ministry. The new rating system provided economic incentives to filmmakers who complied with National Socialist ideology, since films deemed "politically" and "artistically" valuable were progressively exempted from taxes. It also expanded the film examination board's power to exercise censorship. According to paragraph seven of the new Reich Cinema Law: "Approval is denied if the examination demonstrates that the film's presentation will endanger vital state interests or public order or security, offend the National Socialist, religious, moral or artistic sensibilities, have a brutalizing or demoralizing effect, endanger German prestige or the relationship between Germany and foreign states."¹⁴

The Reich Cinema Law was later amended on June 28, 1935, so that the propaganda minister could forbid any film independently of the decision made by the examination board. According to this newly amended law, Goebbels could act without restrictions, "if he considers it necessary based on the public well-being."¹⁵ Goebbels exercised his authority to censor films at various stages in their development and, especially in the cases of *Staatsauftragsfilme* (films commissioned by the state), was often personally involved in script changes.

The Reich Film Dramaturge was empowered to pre-censor film projects: "A draft and the screenplay of feature films produced in Germany must be submitted for examination to the Reich Film Dramaturge before filming can begin" in order "to prevent in a timely fashion the treatment of material which runs counter to the spirit of the time."¹⁶ Goebbels defined the role of the Film Dramaturge as essential:

[He] has the task of examining a film project according to the state's point of view, and namely not as a critic but as a patron. The Film Dramaturge's task is to prevent in a timely fashion any possible mistakes from appearing, so that the film's correction does not begin when the film is complete but rather when it begins. Thus from the outset, censorship is kept at a minimum after a film's completion, so that the state's collaboration on a film is raised to a maximum when the film is conceived and begun in the studio.¹⁷

These measures were so successful that during the twelve years of Nazi rule, only about two dozen films were completed and then censored, while some eighty to one hundred films were censored shortly after they premiered.¹⁸

Beyond the level of organizational control, Joseph Goebbels turned his attention to more theoretical concerns. Goebbels maintained that effective propaganda has to go beyond mere proselytizing; it must appeal to the emotions. "Art," he asserted, "is nothing more than a shaper of feelings. It comes from feeling and not from reason; the artist is nothing more than an interpreter of this feeling."¹⁹ Film was considered one of the most powerful media in this regard, for as Reich Film Dramaturge Dr. Fritz Hippler insisted, "in contrast to the other arts, film has by virtue of its capacity to work primarily on the optical and emotional, thus non-intellectual, levels, an especially penetrating and lasting effect from a mass psychological and propagandistic standpoint. It does not influence the opinion of exclusive circles of connoisseurs, rather it seizes the broad masses."²⁰

If the government could ascertain and satisfy the audience's emotional and psychological needs, then it could simultaneously influence them without much resistance. Like sugarcoating a sour pill, the Nazis hoped to present their ideas so pleasantly that they would be readily acceptable. Goebbels advocated "invisible" propaganda that educated the masses, appealed to the emotions, and stressed behavior and moral values over overt political ideology. He urged the motion picture industry to create films in which the fascist agenda was motivated by the story and characters, not a mere veneer applied to conform to the propaganda ministry's expectations. Goebbels reasoned:

I do not want an art that proves its National Socialist character merely by displaying National Socialist emblems and symbols, rather I want an art that expresses its attitude through National Socialist character and by addressing National Socialist problems energetically. . . . The moment that propaganda becomes conscious, it is ineffective. At the moment, however, when it remains in the background as propaganda, as tendency, as character, as attitude and only appears through action, through time, through events, through contrasts between people, it becomes effective in every respect.²¹

Fritz Hippler contended that film's capacity to inspire identification was a crucial factor in influencing the broad masses because "film produces, besides the personal connection of the spectator to the main character during the course of the film, the attempt to be like him."²² Star identification along with emotional engagement were seen as the most important tools to agitate for current political goals, shape behavioral norms and social practices, and foster a collective identity. However, film commentators noted that the audience did not merely consume films and adopt role models uncritically. Writing for the government-sponsored film journal, *Der deutsche Film*, Frank Maraun conceded that "it is often said that film condemns the viewer to passivity and — in contrast to the novel — grants his fantasy no elbowroom, no opportunity for validation. . . . If film derails the viewer's fantasy, forcing him to accept the world of ready-made images flashing by up on the screen, then on the other hand it also demands an active effort from him, actually two — observation and interpretation."²³ It was the filmmaker's difficult task to enchant viewers and win them over to National Socialism, limiting their avenues for interpretation by appealing to their emotional needs and obstructing critical thought.

Of the 1,094 German feature films made between 1933 and 1945, only 153 are generally considered outright propaganda.²⁴ Until recently, most critical studies of Nazi cinema concentrated on overt propaganda films commissioned by the state as a means to understand National Socialist ideology.²⁵ While propaganda films are an important facet of Nazi cinema, to concentrate exclusively on these well-financed, highly publicized political vehicles presents an inaccurate picture of film offerings during the Third Reich. Entertainment films (*Unterhaltungsfilme*) dominated the market; of all the feature films produced in Nazi Germany, 523 or nearly one half were comedies and musicals, 295 were melodramas or serious dramas, and 123 were detective and adventure films.²⁶ These genre films catered to the needs and desires of a mass audience, providing orientation and an outlet for wish fulfillment, escapism, amusement, distraction, and thrills. Based on these characteristics, many scholars have viewed the entertainment film as "apolitical" and as manifesting merely indirect or latent propaganda value.²⁷ Beginning in the 1990s, scholars such as Eric Rentschler, Linda Schulte-Saase, and more recently Sabine Hake and Lutz Koepnick among others, have ushered in a new era in film studies by looking beyond state-commissioned propaganda films to investigate Nazi popular cinema. These important book-length studies offer a nuanced evaluation of entertainment in the Third Reich and provide original and alternative models for understanding how classical narratives operated in complex and often paradoxical ways in the fascist state.²⁸

Nazi entertainment films cannot be separated completely from politics. Although these motion pictures provide the spectator with a release from everyday life, many also exhibit central tenets of Nazi ideology. Values such as obedience, self-sacrifice, order, and the leadership principle, for example, are

often promoted in the context of amusing stories. Entertainment films subtly participate in the larger framework of everyday fascism, perhaps more effectively than overt propaganda precisely because their messages are less intrusive and more readily acceptable. Ironically, some of the most memorable motion pictures seem to be telling two stories at once; one that endorses the system and one that calls it into question. I suggest that both stories work to uphold the status quo. In this book I explore two avenues of inquiry; one charts the regime's success in structuring films with mechanisms to steer the audience toward a specific ideological agenda, the other sketches an alternative reading that appears to offer utopian possibilities but ultimately reaffirms fascist institutions. I focus on discursive strategies in Nazi cinema, which neutralize subversive energy and validate the prevailing order. Deviant behavior is repeatedly played out and then reigned in and overcome at the conclusion. Contradictions in National Socialist society are thus exposed, worked out, and deflected. The spectator's pleasure in deviance and transgression evolves safely within controlled parameters, while challenges to the system are rendered ineffectual and unjust. A second, different reading examines how the pervasive attention granted conflict and aberrant behavior, the sympathetic portrayal of abnormal characters, and filmic devices such as self-reflexivity all run counter to the sometimes stated, sometimes illusive objectives of the Nazi propaganda machine. I will argue that this potential sedition, whether openly acknowledged by the state or not, operates as a ventilator for social frustrations. Most importantly, it is in the tension between these disparate yet complementary readings that pleasure and persuasion merge.

Clearly, not all German films made during the Third Reich contain an overt fascist ideology or even subtle, covertly fascist messages. However, all feature films were politicized by their function within the fascist state. Framed within a collectivized, government-supported entertainment industry, the feature film provided the German populace with a type of dream world, a safe place where the spectator could reconstitute reality in a socially acceptable arena. Subversive thoughts, resistance to collectivization, and transgression of moral laws were allowed expression in organized leisure. Whether a farce about vagabonds and petty criminals or a melodrama of seduction and adultery, the feature film could transport the spectator to a psychological realm in which opposition to daily life in fascism was given an outlet.

The films I analyze in the following pages are among the most popular German films ever made and many of them still delight television audiences today. It is my contention that these films were so well loved and continue to fascinate viewers because they espouse values that speak to basic human needs. The melodramas with their appeal for stability in the family and security in the community, the home-front films calling for unity, the adventure films providing an encounter with the exotic without physical danger, or the

musicals with their happy-go-lucky song and dance routines all satisfy widespread psychological needs.

My book is organized around five popular film genres in Nazi cinema. I have selected a variety of genres that range from the immensely fashionable melodrama to the less celebrated adventure film because they reflect the public's taste and also conform to Goebbels's orchestra principle. Goebbels maintained that the film industry resembles an orchestra, where each performer plays a different instrument, but they all play the same tune. Genre cinema would offer a multitude of stories, but they would all function within a coordinated system with the same basic goals. I have chosen individual films to represent each genre based on several considerations. First of all, I concentrate on motion pictures produced in the years between 1937 and 1945 because by this time the Nazi government was purchasing stock in all the major film studios and had considerable oversight of the film industry and trade press. Therefore, the films produced in this period are more likely to reveal an aesthetic and ideological stance influenced by National Socialism than films made during the transitional period of 1933 to 1936. Secondly, I have chosen some films that were box office hits and others that failed to garner critical or public approval, because this array indicates what succeeded and also what failed to resonate with the moviegoing public. Finally, I explore a group of films that are currently available only in German film archives and range in quality from B-films to masterpieces, because they deserve scrutiny in order to gauge the full capacity of the entertainment industry in the Third Reich.

Chapter 1, "Dancing on the Volcano: History, Utopia, and the Social Construction of Happiness," examines how the Nazi musical depicts history as a state governed by two types of happiness, ecstasy and *Schadenfreude* (finding happiness in other people's pain), both having a political function in maintaining the status quo. These historical musicals belong to a larger category of films that use the nineteenth century to recount a shared past as the basis on which to forge a personal and national identity in the present. This genre invited viewers to recall the familiar collective memory of a good society lost and momentarily regained in the world of cinema.

The foreign adventure film features explorers and treasure hunters who journey abroad to encounter other races, conquer unknown realms, and return home with astonishing riches. Chapter 2, "Mapping German Identity: The Foreign Adventure Film," focuses on how this genre teaches substantial political lessons for building the German empire: the need to invade foreign territory to secure material resources and the equally pressing need to protect oneself from the fatal attraction to the foreign. The adventure film extols the rewards of conquering foreign soil and promotes a pioneering spirit, population growth, and the sacrifice of one's life for the survival of the folk. It routinely indulges in the seductive entertainment of violated boundaries, an upsetting

enchantment associated with voyeurism, interracial desire, and homoeroticism to illustrate how deviant pleasure is successfully channeled into procreation.

The home-front film explores the bond between the civilian populace and the front-line soldier in wartime love stories and family dramas, using culture and entertainment to package war for sale to the German people. Chapter 3, "The Celluloid War: The Home-Front Film," examines how this genre mobilizes audiences psychologically for war. As vehicles promoting the idea of a nation united against the enemy, Nazi home-front films reflect developments on the battlefield and the government's need to adjust its propaganda according to the vagaries of war. Like all successful entertainment films in the Third Reich, the home-front film trains spectators to insulate themselves from the upsetting aspects of reality, extricating troubling events, and replacing them with palatable alternatives. The mindset created in the movies is transferable to everyday life, so that the audience can imagine total war as tenable.

The cinematic melodrama of the Third Reich engaged the popular imagination with mesmerizing images of strong, tormented women and discontented family life. Boasting some of the most successful films produced in Nazi Germany, the melodrama exerted a fascination on audiences altogether incongruous with government propaganda championing the Aryan home as the bastion of social harmony. Chapter 4, "Discontented Domesticity: The Melodrama," explores how this genre advances a political agenda in the guise of harmless diversion, entertaining viewers with archetypal love stories, while educating them to instrumentalize sexuality in the service of the state, to maintain racial purity, and to enforce euthanasia. The Nazi melodrama aestheticizes female suffering and sacrificial death, satisfying the emotional need for romance while sublimating fantasies of domination to the level of beautiful art.

Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels repeatedly called for exemplary films about contemporary life in Nazi Germany and lamented that "problem films," serious works dealing with social issues, seldom graced the screen. It is surprising that Goebbels would argue so adamantly in favor of the problem film because the genre demands an honest discussion of society's ills in a way that National Socialism routinely rejected. Emphasizing how individuals confront social contradictions beyond their control, the problem film casts a critical look at the world as it is and explicitly calls for change. Thus Goebbels was forced to censor the problem films he originally endorsed, because they exposed social problems that National Socialism did not want to address openly or could not solve satisfactorily. A common feature of these films is that they reflect disenchantment with National Socialism and leave the viewer with haunting images of unfulfilled passions, senseless brutality, and dissatisfaction with the status quo. Chapter 5, "The Forbidden Desires of Everyday Life: The Problem Film," introduces readers to these rare and noteworthy films, which illustrate the aspirations and the limitations of cinema in the Third Reich.

National Socialism wanted to control the nation's dreams and tried to enchant audiences with a mindset advantageous to its immediate political goals. However, for all its efforts, the government could never be entirely successful at determining how the public received motion pictures. Once the dream comes into being, it cannot be controlled. The state tried to manage the production of dreams — what ideas were presented, what actors held the roles, when the films premiered, what messages were conveyed through the plot — but once the films were projected onto the screen, the audience took on the role of interpreter. Spectators brought their personal experience, familiarity with actors, genres, myths, and filmic traditions into the cinema, and these factors could not be regulated completely. Indeed, it is often the ambiguities, the multivalent images, and the indeterminate narratives that make films of lasting significance.

Notes

¹ “Es gab sonst nur wenig, was die Menschen verband, und nicht nur verband, sondern auch ihren höchsten Willen erregte. Die Politik stieß häufig ab, war kleinlich und wurde von einer Minderheit besorgt; die Kunst befriedigte nur einzelne, abgeschlossene Teile der Seele. Vor allen Dingen lagen die wichtigsten Gemütsbedürfnisse, die religiösen, brach; es gab keinen lebendigen allgemeinverpflichtenden Glauben, der unserem Wesen entsprach, in dem wir es hätten läutern können.” Siegfried Kracauer, “Vom Erleben des Krieges,” vol. 5.1 of *Schriften*, ed. Inka Mülder-Bach (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1990), 15.

² “Es streiten hier um die Vorherrschaft das Pflichtgefühl, die Freude an der Übereinstimmung mit der Gemeinschaft, das dumpfe Hingerissensein von der Stimmung der Masse, der Abenteuertrieb, die Lust am Dreinschlagen, der Ehrgeiz, die Neugierde.” “Es ist ja der natürlichste Zustand der Menschen, im Rausch des Zieles dem Ideal zu dienen. Auch die kleinste Handlung wird dann geheiligt und das Lebensgefühl unendlich erhöht.” Kracauer, “Vom Erleben des Krieges,” 14 and 16.

³ Wolfgang Schluchter discusses the controversial dating of Weber's lecture “Science as Vocation” in *Paradoxes of Modernity: Culture and Conduct in the Theory of Max Weber*, trans. Neil Solomon (Stanford: Stanford UP, 1996), 46–47.

⁴ Max Weber, “Science as a Vocation,” *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, eds. and trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1948), 155.

⁵ Max Weber, *Economy and Society*, eds. Guenther Roth and Claus Wittich, trans. Ephraim Fischhoff (Berkeley: U of California P, 1978), 506.

⁶ See especially chapter four, “The Hunger for Wholeness: Trials of Modernity” in Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968).

⁷ Eric Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and Its Afterlife* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1996), 16.

⁸ Barry Keith Grant, “Experience and Meaning in Genre Films,” *Film Genre Reader*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (Austin: U of Texas P, 1986), 114–28.

⁹ Stephen Neale, *Genre* (London: British Film Institute, 1980), 63.

¹⁰ James Monaco, *How To Read a Film* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1981), 222.

¹¹ For a contemporaneous discussion of the star system in the Third Reich, see Hans Spielhofer, "Der Filmschauspieler: Eine typenkundliche Betrachtung," *Der deutsche Film* 2, no. 2 (June 1938): 326–28; Helmut Kindler, "Star als Genre," *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 12 (June 1939): 340; and Hans Spielhofer, "Wunschtraum oder Wirklichkeit? Eine Betrachtung über Notwendigkeit und Problematik ihrer Abgrenzung," *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 11 (May 1939): 317–22.

¹² In recent years, historians and cultural critics have explored the various ways in which National Socialism appealed to the German public. Scholars have been especially intrigued by Hans Dieter Schäfer's notion that Nazi Germany suffered from a "divided consciousness." On the one hand the government reigned through terror and enforced conformity, but on the other hand it also gave the public a thriving entertainment industry and the promise of a politically free zone filled with consumer products. See Hans Dieter Schäfer, *Das gesplittete Bewußtsein: Deutsche Kultur und Lebenswirklichkeit*, 3d ed. (Munich: Hanser, 1983); Detlev J. K. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life*, trans. Richard Deveson (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987); and Peter Reichel, *Der schöne Schein des Dritten Reiches: Faszination und Gewalt des Faschismus* (Munich: Hanser, 1991).

¹³ "Das Genreokino funktionierte zwölf Jahre lang als Anwalt der kleinen Leute, ihrer Alltagsorgen und alltäglichen Wünsche, ihres Sicherheitsverlangen, ihrer Glücksvorstellungen, ihrer 'kleinen Fluchten' und, vor allem, ihrer Bedürfnisse nach Normalität." Klaus Kreimeier, "Von Henny Porten zu Zarah Leander: Filmgenres and Genrefilm in der Weimarer Republik und im Nationalsozialismus," *Montage/Av: Zeitschrift für Theorie & Geschichte audiovisueller Kommunikation* 3.2 (1994): 45.

¹⁴ "Die Zulassung ist zu versagen, wenn die Prüfung ergibt, daß die Vorführung des Films geeignet ist, lebenswichtige Interessen des Staates oder die öffentliche Ordnung oder Sicherheit zu gefährden, das nationalsozialistische, religiöse, sittliche oder künstliche Empfinden zu verletzen, verrohend oder entsittlichend zu wirken, das deutsche Ansehen oder die Beziehungen Deutschlands zu auswärtigen Staaten zu gefährden." Qtd. in Gerd Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik: Eine soziologische Untersuchung über die Spielfilme des Dritten Reiches* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1969), 512.

¹⁵ "Wenn er aus dringenden Gründen des öffentlichen Wohls für erforderlich hält." Qtd. in Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 512.

¹⁶ "Spielfilme, die in Deutschland hergestellt werden, müssen vor der Verfilmung dem Reichsfilmdramaturgen im Entwurf und im Drehbuch zur Begutachtung eingereicht werden," "[um] rechtzeitig zu verhindern, daß Stoffe behandelt werden, die dem Geist der Zeit zuwiderlaufen." Qtd. in Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 510–11.

¹⁷ "Diese Filmdramaturgie hat die Aufgabe, nach staatspolitischen Gesichtspunkten die Filmvorhaben zu überprüfen, und zwar nicht als Beckmesser, sondern als Förderer. Die Aufgabe des Filmdramaturgs besteht darin, auftauchende Fehlermöglichkeiten rechtzeitig schon zu verhindern, damit die Korrektur am Film nicht dann beginnt, wenn er fertig ist, sondern dann, wenn er angefangen wird, damit also von vornherein die große Zensuraufgabe nach Fertigstellung am Film auf ein Minimum

beschränkt wird, damit aber die Mitarbeit am Film von Seiten des Staates auf ein Maximum heraufgesetzt wird in dem Augenblick, in dem der Film im Begriff steht, im Atelier begonnen zu werden." Speech by Goebbels from February 15, 1941, qtd. in Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 475.

¹⁸ Kraft Wetzels and Peter Hagemann, *Zensur: Verbotene deutsche Filme 1933–1945* (Berlin: Volker Spiess, 1978), 7 and 44.

¹⁹ "Die Kunst ist nichts anderes als Gestalter des Gefühls. Sie kommt vom Gefühl und nicht vom Verstand her; der Künstler ist nichts anderes als der Sinngeber dieses Gefühls." Speech by Joseph Goebbels from March 5, 1937, qtd. in Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 447.

²⁰ "Im Vergleich zu den anderen Künsten ist der Film durch seine Eigenschaft, primär auf das Optische und Gefühlsmäßige, also Nichtintellektuelle einzuwirken, massenpsychologisch und propagandistisch von besonders eindringlicher und nachhaltiger Wirkung. Er beeinflusst nicht die Meinung exklusiver Kreise von Kunstkennern, sondern er erfaßt die breiten Massen." Fritz Hippler, *Betrachtungen zum Filmschaffen*, 5th rev. ed. (Berlin: Max Hesses Verlag, 1943), 14. Fritz Hippler later took over the newly inaugurated position of Reich Film Intendant on February 29, 1942.

²¹ "Ich wünschte nicht etwa eine Kunst, die ihren nationalsozialistischen Charakter lediglich durch Zurschaustellung nationalsozialistischer Embleme und Symbole beweist, sondern eine Kunst, die ihre Haltung durch nationalsozialistischen Charakter und durch Aufraffen nationalsozialistischer Probleme zum Ausdruck bringt. . . . Im Augenblick, da eine Propaganda bewußt wird, ist sie unwirksam. Mit dem Augenblick aber, in dem sie als Propaganda, als Tendenz, als Charakter, als Haltung im Hintergrund bleibt und nur durch Handlung, durch Ablauf, durch Vorgänge, durch Kontrastierung von Menschen in Erscheinung tritt, wird sie in jeder Hinsicht wirksam." Qtd. in Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 456.

²² "Der Film erzeugt nämlich neben der persönlichen Verbindung des Zuschauers zum Hauptdarsteller während des Filmablaufs auch das Bestreben, diesem gleich zu sein." Hippler, *Betrachtungen zum Filmschaffen*, 95.

²³ "Man hat oft gesagt, daß der Film den Zuschauer zur Passivität verurteilt und seiner Phantasie — etwa im Gegensatz zum Roman — keinen Spielraum, keine Bestätigungsmöglichkeit mehr lasse. . . . Wenn der Film die Phantasie des Zuschauers außer Kurs setzt, indem er ihn die auf der Leinwand vorüberziehende fertige Bilderwelt anzunehmen zwingt, so verlangt er auf der anderen Seite doch eine aktive Leistung von ihm, sogar zwei — Beobachtung und Sinndeutung." Frank Maraun, "Das Erlebnis entscheidet: Der abendfüllende Kulturfilm — von verschiedenen Seiten gesehen," *Der deutsche Film* 2, no. 7 (January 1938): 189.

²⁴ For a complete list of the films produced in Nazi Germany and a breakdown according to genre, see Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 97–122. Albrecht categorizes films as "P-Filme" (propaganda films with manifest political content) or "nP-Filme" (non-propaganda films with latent political function), 103–8.

²⁵ Studies on propaganda films include Erwin Leiser, *"Deutschland, erwache!" Propaganda im Film des Dritten Reiches* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1968); David Stewart Hull, *Film in the Third Reich* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1969); David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933–1945* (New York: Oxford UP,

1983); Hilmar Hoffmann, *“Und die Fabne führt uns in die Ewigkeit”: Propaganda im NS-Film* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer Verlag, 1988); and Klaus Kanzog, *“Staatspolitisch besonders wertvoll”: Ein Handbuch zu 30 deutschen Spielfilmen der Jahre 1934 bis 1945* (Munich: Diskurs Film Verlag, 1994). Broad-based surveys of Nazi cinema include Bogusław Drewniak, *Der deutsche Film 1938–1945: Ein Gesamtüberblick* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1987); and Pierre Cadars and Francis Courtade, *Geschichte des Films im Dritten Reich*, trans. Florian Hopf (Munich: Hanser, 1975).

²⁶ Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 97–123.

²⁷ Hull and Courtade and Cadars view entertainment films as primarily escapist fare. By contrast, noted critic Siegfried Kracauer states: “To be sure, all Nazi films were more or less propaganda film — even the mere entertainment pictures which seem to be remote from politics.” *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1947), 275. See also Wolfgang Becker, *Film und Herrschaft* (Berlin: Spiess, 1973), 119.

²⁸ See Stephen Lowry, *Pathos und Politik: Ideologie in Spielfilmen des Nationalsozialismus* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1991); Klaus Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story: Geschichte eines Filmkonzerns* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1992); Dora Traudisch, *Mutterschaft mit Zuckerguß?: Frauenfeindliche Propaganda im NS-Spielfilm* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus, 1993); Linda Schulte-Sasse, *Entertaining the Third Reich: Illusions of Wholeness in Nazi Cinema* (Durham: Duke UP, 1996); Marcia Klotz, “Epistemological Ambiguity and the Fascist Text: *Jew Süss*, *Carl Peters*, and *Ohm Krüger*,” *New German Critique* 74 (Spring-Summer 1998): 91–124; Sabine Hake, *Popular Cinema of the Third Reich* (Austin: U of Texas P, 2001); and Lutz Koepnick, *The Dark Mirror: German Cinema between Hitler and Hollywood* (Berkeley: U of California P, 2002).

1: History, Utopia, and the Social Construction of Happiness: The Historical Musical

THE MUSICAL IS often considered a frivolous and even trivial film genre, which audiences do not take seriously because it is unrealistic, promotes cheerfulness over substance, choreographs movement, and caters to escapist fantasies.¹ Yet it is precisely the musical's emphasis on nostalgia, gaiety, controlled energy, and collective release that makes it an excellent starting point for a study on the social construction of happiness in Nazi Germany. National Socialists recognized that the "low aesthetic tone" of popular culture could intoxicate the masses and fuel political action. The enthusiasm generated from such popular forms of entertainment as the musical could be channeled into the political realm. Adolf Hitler argued that widespread enthusiasm was essential to the Nazi revolution:

Enthusiasm once scotched cannot be awakened at need. It is an intoxication and must be preserved in this state. And how, without this power of enthusiasm, should a country withstand a struggle, which in all likelihood would make the most enormous demands on the spiritual qualities of the nation? I knew the psyche of the broad masses too well not to be aware that a high "aesthetic" tone would not stir up the fire that was necessary to keep the iron hot.²

Exhilaration for the present can be wrapped up in nostalgia for a simpler time, one filled with music and a preordained happy ending. The feelings generated from such an encounter with the past are redeemable for the present with songs that linger in the audience's heart and mind after the screen fades to black. Several notable German musicals from the 1930s offer a utopian vision of history, where the turbulent political arena is subdued by light-hearted music and dance. Drawing on Richard Dyer's argument that the Hollywood musical offers a glimpse at "what utopia would feel like rather than how it would be organized,"³ this chapter examines how the Nazi musical depicts history as a state driven by emotions with explicit parallels to the present. I will take as my point of departure the 1938 musical *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* (Dancing on the Volcano), directed by Hans Steinhoff and starring Gustaf Gründgens. What does this film about the July Revolution have to say about civil unrest and political dissent in general? Can an exami-

nation of the ways in which the musical treats the past tell us anything about the power of cinema to create a mind-set conducive to totalitarianism? And will such a venture in historiophoty, defined by Hayden White as “the representation of history and our thoughts about it in visual images and filmic discourse,”⁴ help to broaden our understanding of the Nazi cultural sphere? The second half of this chapter examines Hans H. Zerlett’s *Robert und Bertram*, Nazi Germany’s only anti-Semitic musical based on a popular nineteenth-century stage production. What does this farce about two vagabonds cheating the Jews out of their property in 1839 Germany tell us about the cinema’s use of the past to constitute an image of the national community and its enemies? And to what extent does the farce’s basic premise of a cheerfully ridiculous world help accustom the viewer to a truly absurd reality outside the movie theater?



Politics as pathos: *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* (1938).

Ecstatic Revolution: *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* (1938)

Set in 1830 Paris on the verge of revolution, *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* is based very loosely on the life of celebrated nineteenth-century mime Jean-Baptiste-Gaspard Debureau.⁵ In Steinhoff’s film, Debureau is a revue singer who performs nightly to jubilant crowds in Théâtre des Funambules. By day he secretly writes satirical verses against King Charles X and in favor of the

Prince of Orléans, Louis Philippe. Debureau is the king's adversary in politics and in love, for they both desire Countess Cambouilly, a beautiful, married woman who enjoys the spotlight. Fueled by equal amounts of jealousy and political fervor, Debureau openly sings his satires against the king and is arrested. Sentenced to die by the guillotine, Debureau is saved by the revolting masses, while Charles is forced to flee the country leaving France in the hands of the beloved bourgeois king, Louis Philippe. The final scene features a triumphant Debureau held on his admirers' shoulders in front of the guillotine as he leads the ecstatic masses in a jubilant song celebrating the spiritual and emotional rewards of revolution.

Tanz auf dem Vulkan appears to be a cultural paradox, inviting more questions than answers. What inspired director Hans Steinhoff, best known to posterity for his overt propaganda films *Hitlerjunge Quex* (1933), *Der alte und der junge König* (1935), *Robert Koch, der Bekämpfer des Todes* (1939), and *Ohm Krüger* (1941), to direct a light-hearted musical about the July Revolution? Why would the highly respected classical actor Gustaf Gründgens star in this musical? Why did Steinhoff, co-authors Hans Rehberg and Peter Hagen,⁶ all sympathetic to the NSDAP, write a story about political persecution, censorship of the arts, a police state, and totalitarianism? Finally, why would they take a prominent nineteenth-century French mime and turn him into a revue singer of political limericks?

Film historians, perhaps more than the viewing public in 1938, appear perplexed by this film and are often guided by false or misleading information. First of all, let us clarify the most basic facts. *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* passed the censor in Berlin on November 28, 1938.⁷ It was never banned, as Curt Riess incorrectly asserts.⁸ Indeed, it received the Propaganda Ministry's rating of "artistically valuable" and premiered on November 30, 1938, in Stuttgart. It was not held back from release until 1941 as Friedrich Luft and Heinrich Goertz falsely claim.⁹ Finally, the Propaganda Ministry did not ban the film's main song, "Die Nacht ist nicht allein zum Schlafen da," as Volker Kühn, Christa Bandmann, and Joe Hembus erroneously maintain.¹⁰ The Tobis studio provided movie theaters with a promotional recording and extensive publicity material tied to local radio stations and music stores where a commercial record would be available.¹¹ Grammophon also released a recording of the song in the summer of 1939.¹²

Three influential viewers, however, disliked the film, and their comments may have flavored subsequent readings. Adolf Hitler saw *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* before its premiere and criticized both Gründgens's performance and Steinhoff's direction.¹³ Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels likewise berated the film in his diary: "Typical Gründgens. A bit too cerebral. It still needs to be edited a lot."¹⁴ Gründgens was reportedly so disappointed with his own performance that he asked his colleagues whether he should have the film banned with Göring's help.¹⁵ The broad public, however, apparently liked the film,

because it had a successful run in the theaters.¹⁶ The film's enduring popularity and the Propaganda Ministry's tacit approval are further demonstrated by the inclusion of a film clip from *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* in Werner Malbran's 1941 documentary of Tobis hit films, *Wir erinnern uns gern*.¹⁷

Hans Steinhoff's decision to make a historical musical is perhaps best understood if we review his career path. Steinhoff began his professional life as a singer and stage actor in Munich, Berlin, and Vienna but turned to screenwriting and film direction shortly after the First World War. During the Weimar Republic he worked in a wide variety of genres, ranging from comedies, musicals, and melodramas to literary adaptations, social commentaries, and historical dramas. Despite his versatility, Steinhoff was particularly drawn to two different film genres, the musical and the historical drama. Although most of his films can be delineated either as musicals providing exhilaration or as historical dramas affording political commentary, *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* represents a hybrid genre with its attendant viewer misapprehension.¹⁸

Audiences today will most likely recognize Gustaf Gründgens as the model for Klaus Mann's novel *Mephisto* (1936) and István Szabó's film adaptation of the same name (1981), in which the actor epitomizes the opportunistic, intellectual Nazi collaborator. During the Third Reich, Gründgens enjoyed a reputation as a distinguished stage actor playing such memorable roles as Hamlet and Mephisto. He was widely known as the talented managing director of the Schauspielhaus am Gendarmenmarkt, the general director of the Prussian state theaters, a cultural senator, and a Prussian state minister under Göring's patronage.¹⁹ While Goebbels and Hitler apparently disliked Gründgens as an individual and an actor,²⁰ they recognized that his continued work in the cultural industry could lend respectability to National Socialism. Gründgens's achievements helped legitimize the Nazi regime and make it *salonfähig*.

Several contemporary critics have marveled at Gründgens's decision to work under the direction of the propagandist Steinhoff. Michael Töteberg, in his otherwise informative article, errs when he states, "*Dancing on the Volcano* (1938) was the name of a feature film by Hans Steinhoff, and Gründgens only took on the role of the politicizing actor Debureau in it because of the suggestive title."²¹ This explanation is highly unlikely since the filmscript was given the working title *Wenn Debureau spielt*, and the trade papers first advertised the film under the titles *Debureau* and *Genie und Leidenschaft*. More plausible is the explanation Gründgens gave in an interview during the production of *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*: "The film has everything . . . love, politics and theater. Debureau is a tremendously passionate man whose life has a great adventurous tone. . . . I was tempted above all by the great romantic gesture of his life."²² Indeed, Gründgens had already worked with the director, screenwriter, composer, cameraman, set designer, and many of the actors.²³ His choice of playing the historical figure Debureau

in a musical was also consistent with his other film work in the 1930s and 1940s. While Gründgens was widely known for his adversarial roles in *M* (1931) and *Liebelei* (1933), his film career was characterized as much by his historical roles: Robespierre in *Danton* (1931), Metternich in *So endet die Liebe* (1934), Chamberlain in *Ohm Krüger* (1941), and Friedemann Bach in *Friedemann Bach* (1941). He also made a name for himself in film, as he had done on the stage, through his work in comedies and musicals such as *Die Gräfin von Monte Christo* (1932), *Eine Stadt steht Kopf* (director, 1933), *Die Finanzen des Großherzogs* (director, 1934), *Pygmalion* (1935), and *Capriolen* (director/star, 1937).

Both Steinhoff and Gründgens favored historical dramas and musicals, especially biopics focusing on the life of a remarkable individual. Since stars bring to each new role their reputation and are recognized as a specific type based on their entire body of work, typecasting helps define audience expectations. The same can be said for directors. Audiences often attend a film based on their previous experiences with an actor or director. In a special issue of *Der deutsche Film* (May 1939) dedicated to audience expectations, surveys confirmed that most viewers chose a film based on the content and the star. Gustaf Gründgens was included among the ten most popular actors in Germany. Stars like Gründgens were seen as indispensable because, as one contemporary reporter remarked: "We all need to consider our dreams and wishes, looking up to the stars, to something higher, more beautiful, richer, to ideal and dream images, as anything but a mere waste of time or ineffective enervation."²⁴ The star was considered so significant that one critic suggested: "The name of the star reveals everything. It says whether it will be a burlesque film or a serious one, whether there will be singing and dancing, or whether there will be lots of good old-fashioned fun. In short, the name of the star designates a genre!"²⁵ Faced then with the "genre" of Gründgens and the historical-musical hybrid, what were audiences likely to expect? The trade papers emphasized the historical authenticity of this film, citing not only Gründgens's penchant for historical roles but also Steinhoff's exhaustive research into the life and times of Deburau.

During the production phase, *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* was promoted as an engaging historical drama with sensational musical pieces. Critics treated the film's historical setting as a serious attempt to portray authentic social and political conflicts. Felix Henseleit marveled at the attention to historical details, both in Rochus Gliese's set designs of nineteenth-century Paris and in the screenwriters' depiction of the revolution. Henseleit wrote: "And while the great actor of the July Revolution agitates more and more vigorously, we sense the historical meaning of the moment expressed so clearly under Hans Steinhoff's direction: Paris and thus France stood in those days at the turning-point of two ages." Henseleit was especially impressed with Gründgens's acting and "his power of transformation, which is so suggestive that we no

longer believe we are experiencing a reenactment of events but rather the events themselves.”²⁶

Although *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* is clearly light-hearted, its presentation of history is not far from that of Steinhoff’s serious and leaden historical films like *Der alte und der junge König*, *Rembrandt*, or *Ohm Krüger*. In all these films, it is the artist-leader who propels history. Erwin Leiser explains the importance of the leader figure in Nazi cinema: “The great poets, painters, sculptors, scientists, explorers, politicians and generals honoured in the Third Reich cinema were all projections of the Führer, himself exalted in propaganda as a great general, supreme politician, artist and architect of genius.”²⁷ Just as the genius films create an enduring Führer myth resembling Adolf Hitler’s own carefully fashioned self-image, we find here a great popular artist who is forced to become a rebel and politician to save the nation from a decadent and heartless rule. Debureau is featured as a charismatic leader who embodies the nation’s utopian desires. He speaks on behalf of the masses, voicing their collective political will and acting as the conscience of society, because as one character remarks, “Debureau and Paris, that is the same thing.”²⁸

In Steinhoff’s film Debureau is the primary force behind the revolution. He writes inflammatory political verses, organizes the underground movement, advises Louis Philippe to seize the throne, and preaches insurrection disguised as the Prince of Orléans. The masses revolt to save Debureau from the guillotine and not for any clear political agenda. Although this depiction of the July Revolution is obviously fictional by scholarly standards, the trade papers vouched for its historical validity. Critics argued that the film rendered nineteenth-century visual culture with amazing accuracy, reproducing on celluloid the popular images of artists like Daumier, Garvani, and Delacroix. Fan magazines repeatedly cited an old French encyclopedia to verify the factual nature of Debureau’s film actions and to lend credibility to Steinhoff’s rendering of the July Revolution.²⁹

Although fan magazines aimed primarily at the broad movie-going public presented fiction as truth, more academic publications sought to define the precarious relationship between filmmakers and history. Reich Film Intendant Dr. Fritz Hippler, for example, maintained that filmmakers differ from historians because they do not attempt to recreate the past in all its verifiable details. Instead, filmmakers use historical events and persons to illuminate the present, “we make all films based on the necessities and for the demands of the present day. Therefore, contemporary audiences have to understand the historical film and be touched by it, in order to enjoy it or be inspired and enraptured.”³⁰ In *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* the enthusiastic hero Debureau provides this much-needed emotional link to the present. The trade papers highlighted Gründgens’s remarkable physical resemblance to Debureau and their shared passionate temperament.³¹ Hans Hufszky called it “a fantastic duplicity of natures” and insisted: “It almost seems like fate’s

mysterious throw of the dice gave a second life to Debur[.]au as Gründgens. . . . It is as if Gründgens managed to bridge this [hundred year] time difference and geographical separation.”³²

Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels argued that art, unlike science, uses history to validate a “higher” truth:

One could not rightly demand of a historical performer that he confront history like a historian. The historian has the task to portray history factually based on the source material at his disposal. The artist is not limited exclusively to the sources. He has the right, I want to say, to penetrate intuitively into the historical events and shape them based on an intuitive judgement. And it has proven to be the case that in a higher sense great artists have always seen and depicted historical events more truthfully than historians.³³

The “higher truth” of Steinhoff’s film is that weak leaders and a decadent aristocracy fail to offer the broad masses a satisfying emotional life and must be replaced. Pathos lies at the center of Debureau’s politics, and he preaches this creed in his song: “Become enchanted, friends, drink and love and laugh/ And live in the splendid moment./ Spending the night intoxicated/ Means happiness and bliss!”³⁴ He sings of men building bombs in the catacombs, but their revolution is not for a constitution, civil rights, or a new socio-political order. They are fighting for the right to pursue happiness and become intoxicated. Debureau calls for a mass revolution of feelings. While film reporter Martin Klockmann maintained that *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* was dedicated to the “fight for social rights,” he accurately located the revolutionary drive in Debureau’s “feeling of being slighted by the privileged classes. This feeling intensifies to passion and ignites the revolutionary flame in the Parisian masses.”³⁵ History is driven not merely by the individual but by his feelings. Man’s emotional needs fuel and even replace action. This idea is consistent with the National Socialist concept of emotion as the mainstay of propaganda and political conviction. Adolf Hitler consistently appealed to his followers’ feelings and promised the masses an intense emotional bond in the utopian ideal of the *Volkgemeinschaft*. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler clearly outlined his strategy and asserted that propaganda “must be aimed at the emotions and only to a very limited degree at the so-called intellect.”³⁶ Goebbels in turn recognized that “art is nothing more than the shaper of feelings. It comes from feeling and not from reason. The artist is nothing more than an interpreter of this feeling.”³⁷

Social class differences are portrayed as more a matter of simple respect than economic or political stratification. The aristocracy has no consideration for the lower classes or fellow nobles. Count and Countess Cambouilly epitomize the heartless and vain aristocrats who use other people for their own amusement and political advancement. The count so desperately wants

to be accepted at court that he condones and even promotes his wife's affair with the king. This laughable weakling displays no self-respect and repeatedly allows himself to be humiliated and emasculated. At home his wife beats him cruelly in a fencing match, and at court the king derides him for masquerading as his wife's lover, Debureau, just to get public attention. The countess is equally self-serving, collecting men as trophies and unable to overcome her inherent narcissism for true love. King Charles X, however, is the most egotistical and ridiculous figure at court, a petty tyrant who entertains himself with other men's wives and childish pranks. The king's conceited and absurd nature is poignantly revealed when his grand hunting expedition literally turns out to be child's play, with the king sitting in his palace shooting an air pistol at stuffed rabbits pulled on wheels by his servants.

The decadent aristocracy, amusing itself with frivolous games, masked balls, and adultery at court, is juxtaposed to an equally idle but hearty bourgeoisie whiling away the hours at the theater and street cafés. Indeed, the bourgeois audience seems less politically disaffected than merely entertained by the political lyrics. The actors who write, print, and distribute revolutionary pamphlets constitute the truly admirable class. Debureau, his helpers, and the actress Angele represent the most sympathetic characters, modeling the values of work, order, cleanliness, and family. When Debureau tries to become a bridge between the aristocracy and the artist class through his relationship to Countess Cambouilly, he is criticized. One character voices the general sentiment: "He should stay where he belongs," in the theater.³⁸

The working class, by contrast, only appears at the film's conclusion when the masses take to the streets. Although the rebel Debureau argued throughout *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* for a new revolution of feeling, the final mass demonstration is choreographed to suggest that he was always really fighting for economic equality. The proletariat class functions as a primarily visual rather than narrative element, validating the call for revolution in more conventional economic terms. Characterized by their tattered clothing, work-worn faces, and piercing speech, the marching workers seem literally transported from leftist Weimar film classics to evoke a familiar cinematic history of the working class struggle. Steinhoff reverts to the Weimar tradition of depicting street demonstrations with extreme low-angle, close-up shots of running legs, a camera technique popularized in such films as *Mutter Krausens Fahrt ins Glück* (1929), *Kuhle Wampe* (1932), and Steinhoff's own *Hitlerjunge Quex* (1933). The director also uses a series of close-up facial shots superimposed over a flowing tattered flag to suggest the iconography of both Weimar cinema and nineteenth-century painting. With his proletarian figures staged in heroic poses on the barricades, Steinhoff evokes the visual memory of revolution captured in popular images ranging from Luis Trenker's film *Der Rebell* (1932) to Eugène Delacroix's famous painting, "Liberty Leading the People" (1830). The reliance on a shared visual vo-

cabulary helps Steinhoff to align the Nazi concept of political pathos with an easily recognizable history of class struggle.

Tanz auf dem Vulkan repeatedly presents exhilaration as a political category. Indeed, the film propagates the notion that happiness is in itself the intended political action. In a state of near euphoria, Debureau recites his vision of Paris as an earthly paradise:

Do you hear it, that is the music of the city! The melody of streets and squares, bells chiming and dishes clattering, trotting on the pavement and merchants screaming, whispers of girls and the heated debates of men. A rocking and waving, an endless gliding and striding. Noise! Noise! But noise that is like a song. A hell? A paradise? Paris! Be quiet! The city is at heart a lover. I want to hold her, I want to devote my existence to her. She should be happy, she should bloom. Joy should be in her. Joy and freedom! Passionate and glorious life, from day to day, season to season, from today through the centuries until eternity! An endless paradise: Paris!³⁹

This utopian vision of the modern metropolis lies outside the stratified social order of nineteenth-century France. Conceived in terms of an auditory, sentimental, and timeless state of being, Paris is far removed from the real life issues of social class and status, which determine Debureau's relationship to Countess Cambouilly and Charles X. Rather than imagining a world in which political rights and equality reign, Debureau imagines a place where the cacophony of urban sounds is a harmonious melody, time has no boundaries, and the emotions of joy and passion equal freedom.

By locating paradise outside society in a realm that transcends time and nurtures feelings rather than action, the "revolutionary" Debureau helps maintain the existing order. Nothing actually changes after the revolution except that the leader is now popular and the masses are happy. As Karl Mannheim aptly argued in 1936, societies "have always aimed to control those situationally transcendent ideas and interests which are not realizable within the bounds of the present order, and thereby render them socially impotent, so that such ideas would be confined to a world beyond history and society, where they could not affect the *status quo*."⁴⁰

Debureau is an actor who feels most at home on stage, reigning in a world dedicated not just to magic and make-believe but also to powerful emotions. Although he complains about the constant demands put upon actors, he ultimately succumbs to the theater's charms:

Because it is the greatest thing in the world for me to stand there as the curtain goes up and to know that all the people down there are waiting for you and what you have to say to them. You know their desires and dreams, and you can fulfill them. You know their happiness and misery, you can make them laugh and cry. Night after night you fight with

them to conquer their hearts! To enchant them enchants me. They let themselves be led by me and I lead them to where they will be happy: in the eternal realm of art.⁴¹

In Nazi Germany, a society so imbued with hero worship and ecstatic mass response, the cinematic vision of a popular entertainer battling the public to control its emotional life resonates with unique clarity the nation's dream image of itself. The eternal realm of art where everyone is happy, "das ewige Reich der Kunst," is the distorted mirror of the Third Reich. Just as Hitler stylized himself as an artist who sacrificed his personal desires for the nation, Debureau is rendered as an actor devoted to the theater but willing to sacrifice himself for politics. He not only writes and distributes political verses; he becomes, like Hitler, the drummer of revolution.⁴²

The connection between theater and politics so central to National Socialist mass demonstrations and to the cinema of the Third Reich is made explicit in both the dialogue and the action. When asked the difference between life at the Théâtre des Funambules and King Charles's court, Debureau replies, "One puts on an act both here and there."⁴³ In order to achieve revolutionary change on the political stage, society needs the actor's visionary fervor. Indeed, it is the actor and entertainer who sees the inner landscape of the nation and expresses what the politician cannot formulate on his own. The historical mime Jean-Baptiste-Gaspard Debureau becomes the cinematic revue singer Debureau because he can voice the collective subjectivity of the nation. This conspicuous transformation of the historical mime into a cinematic singer may well facilitate the genre conventions of the musical, but it also reflects the National Socialist emphasis on inner-directed politics or *Lebensphilosophie*.⁴⁴ The mime is a potentially subversive presence because he can *act out* his grievances against the authorities. He does not rely on language; he simply *becomes* the thing he abhors. The singer, by contrast, gives voice to the burgher through the sentimental medium of music.

Debureau's song "Die Nacht ist nicht allein zum Schlafen da" is equal parts entertainment and dissent. When Debureau performs the song publicly, he targets the self-satisfied philistine and apolitical citizen in his sleeping cap, reminiscent of the German Michel popularized in nineteenth-century caricatures and poems. Composer Theo Mackeben acknowledged that Debureau's satire "aimed at the petty bourgeois" needed to appeal to the audience as both coarse amusement and lofty protest: "On the one hand, the song has to have a crude vulgar effect with a hint of the gutter, while it later has to sound like a rousing revolutionary song, almost like a hymn to freedom."⁴⁵ This dual function as a vulgar ditty and a solemn hymn is fitting because the melody is used outside the theater as an illegal protest song. Debureau secretly writes verses against the corrupt king and sets them to this same popular melody, so there is always a sense of the familiar in the new. These forbidden political limericks

are thrown from “paradise” (as the Parisians named the cheap seats in the Théâtre des Funambules), posted on walls, and hidden in newspapers. While the music and the satirical tone remain constant, the lyrics and target of criticism constantly change. This shifting focus of discontent creates an ambiguity that allows the audience to read the song and the film in conflicting and subversive ways. The multiple layering of meaning inherent in satire, the critique of one thing that is really another, may well have appealed to contemporary viewers who could see the song as an indictment of National Socialism rather than King Charles’s reign. If the cinematic depiction of a police state led by a petty tyrant who censored the arts and executed his political enemies seemed more like the present than the past, then the call for rebellion must have been a welcome release from a highly censored public sphere.

Tanz auf dem Vulkan offers the audience a lesson on how to read such satires and illustrates that a writer’s intention and a reader’s reception do not always correspond. King Charles X stages a satirical musical review at court in order to humiliate his popular cousin Prince Louis Philippe. The review plays off Louis Philippe’s habit of carrying an umbrella and having a head shaped like a pear. Routinely lampooned in caricatures by artists like Honoré Daumier as “la poire,” Louis Philippe’s image was widely recognized and forms the crux of the satire. While a chanteuse sings of the king’s desire to slice up and devour pears, dancers with umbrellas turn around to reveal the prince’s pear-shaped face on their backsides. The king hopes to anger and embarrass the prince with this loosely disguised criticism. Louis Philippe, however, decides to read the performance as a compliment and thanks the disappointed king for the kind and original honor. The prince receives accolades while the king pouts, demonstrating that satire’s very structure of half concealing dissatisfaction leaves the audience sufficient room to construct meaning on their own. Satire only hints at associations, it uses indirect comedy and skirts around the issues while winking, so that the audience can take pleasure in making the hidden connections visible on their own. The ambiguity and freedom of satire make it appealing but also unruly.

Because Debureau’s own song relies on ambiguity and his audience must read between the lines for it to be effective, the actor yearns to voice his political agenda more directly. Ironically, Debureau must disguise himself in order to become a true agitator and speak directly to the masses. The masquerade is essential to the exercise of power because it allows communication of a truth that is otherwise socially or politically unacceptable. Even within this cautionary tale where the king is a ridiculous and petty figure unworthy of respect or the crown, an open assault on state authority is deemed inappropriate and must be cloaked in a more legitimate and hidden guise. When Debureau physically strikes King Charles and denounces him in a public forum, he goes beyond accepted social norms and must flee for his life. It is only by adopting the costume of a lawful representative of the state that Debureau can momentarily escape imprisonment and also convey his revolutionary goals to the masses.

Debureau disguises himself as Prince Louis Philippe, and in the mask of this legitimate power he openly preaches insurrection:

Parisians, you have just asked me, when will we be ready? I ask you, aren't we ready now? Who among you is without hatred, without anxiety, without fear! You are no longer Frenchmen, you are mere subjects! . . . Where is your laughter, your happiness! Who is responsible for your fate? Perhaps the king? No! Frenchmen, you alone are responsible for your fate! . . . Do you really love the king so much that you do not dare to rise up against him and cast off your chains? . . . Every folk has the government it deserves! Do you want to wile away your life disheartened and groveling. You decide! What are you still waiting for! Our hour has come! The fatherland is calling you now! Frenchmen! Long live France!⁴⁶

Debureau uses the masses' emotional state as a measure of the nation's political health. If the king does not alleviate their hatred, anxiety, and fear, if he leaves them feeling disheartened and servile, they should simply replace him with a better leader, one more in tune with their emotional needs. Debureau argues that it is the leader's utmost task to guarantee the masses happiness and bliss.

Even as he is brought to the guillotine, Debureau questions the despondent crowds huddled together in the streets why they are not happy: "Parisians! I no longer recognize you. Where is the applause with which you usually greet me? Why are you crying? You have to laugh, when Debureau comes! Have you forgotten everything?"⁴⁷ In this climatic scene, Gründgens's performance is heightened to a feverish pitch and borders on hysteria. Although over-excitability is characteristic of his acting style, in the context of this film it takes on a different hue. As the leader of a revolutionary mass movement, Debureau tries to inflame "volcanic eruptions of human passions and emotional sentiments" in keeping with Hitler's own argument that "only a storm of hot passion can turn the destinies of people, and he alone can arouse passion who bears it within himself."⁴⁸ Debureau succeeds in whipping himself and the masses into a frenzy, and this violent unleashing of emotional energy forces King Charles to flee the country and saves Debureau from the executioner's blade. The actress Angele and the entire crowd wave at their leader in a trance-like rapture much like the throngs saluted the Führer in Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph of the Will* (1935). In an eerie conclusion to Steinhoff's film, Debureau jumps onto the scaffold that holds the guillotine and turns the historic site of horrifying public executions into a stage for entertainment and communal happiness. The spectacle of political death is transformed into a musical production replete with a chorus chanting the refrain faithfully repeated throughout the entire film: "Become enchanted, friends, drink and love and laugh/ And live in the splendid moment./ Spending the night intoxicated/ Means happiness and bliss!"

Tanz auf dem Vulkan received mixed reviews. While Goebbels explicitly banned art criticism (*Kunstkritik*) in November 1936 and declared that only art reports (*Kunstberichte*) would appear in newspapers, some journalists like Werner Fiedler at the Berlin *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* were able to publish negative reviews of state-sanctioned films. Fiedler argued that *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* did not strive to portray history accurately:

The whole thing is too playfully structured for that. One would misunderstand the elegant, convincing satirist Gründgens, if one wanted to consider the harmless film action with its numerous improbabilities as serious history. . . . This film is full of original disguise scenes. It is not so much about historical-political tendencies; rather it wants to be an entertaining costume film, a political masquerade, which guarantees a famous actor lavish scenes.⁴⁹

Fiedler contended that *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* was a costume drama that used historical artifice but did not engage historical issues. A similar review appeared in *Der deutsche Film*, where the film was criticized as unrealistic because it portrayed both the king and the prince as ridiculous and ineffective leaders unworthy of their opponent Debureau. The historical conflict is trivialized, because “the political, ideal moment lapses into the personal sphere, jealousy and offended vanity.”⁵⁰ By contrast, the Tobis studio’s official advertising campaign repeatedly advised theater owners “to avoid arousing in the audience the impression of a costume drama,” because *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* “is much more than what the public expects from a costume drama.”⁵¹ Reviewers for the daily trade papers *Film-Kurier* and *Licht-Bild-Bühne* either accepted the film wholeheartedly as a convincing historical drama or merely criticized the portrayal of weak leaders as unrealistic.⁵² Apparently none of the writers seemed to doubt the “higher historical truth” behind the film: that France’s most celebrated mime incited the masses to revolution with a rousing nightclub act.

Whether audiences in 1938 Germany considered *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* a critique of National Socialism turns on questions that can never be answered with any certainty. Did viewers see the story as a reflection of history or the present? Did they recognize themselves and their own political circumstances in the events projected on the screen? Did they read the satire straight or against the grain? The more compelling and potentially more productive question to pose is why the concept of a mass emotional revolution continually dominated the public sphere in Nazi Germany. The notion of politics as pathos so well illustrated in this motion picture was doubtlessly in line with mainstream National Socialist discursive practices. In the political and cultural realm, German audiences were constantly reminded that communal well-being stems from the symbiosis between leader and folk, and the particulars of government are irrelevant as long as the leader fulfills the masses’ emotional needs. Whether

at the Nuremberg rallies where the Führer and the assembled ranks shared a highly emotional bond, where “even a paltry worm could feel like part of a great dragon,”⁵³ or in the movie theater where a charismatic leader joins the frenzied masses in communal bliss, the leader-folk symbiosis relied on the spectacle. The eye looking inward, the audience celebrating its own presence on stage, has no need to look beyond itself. If the masses are occupied with their own reflection, criticism of the political environment becomes unnecessary for happiness. The guarantee of communal bliss and shared emotional release replaces the need for action or political change.

Excursus on Jews and the Nazi Cultural Industry

The lack of empirical studies on the moviegoing public in Nazi Germany makes it difficult to gauge what viewers expected from a film like *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, which social groups saw it, and how audiences reacted to its revolutionary and potentially subversive story. We can, however, determine one aspect of the audience composition with relative certainty. Jews did not attend the premiere run of *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* because they were officially banned from German cinemas.⁵⁴ In order to understand fully the Nazi concept of politics as pathos, the leadership principle, and the building of community illustrated in the cinema of the Third Reich, we need to remember that the *Volkgemeinschaft* (national community) defined itself in opposition to the Jews. It is no coincidence that the release of *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* in November 1938 coincides with heightened anti-Semitic measures. The veneration of a strong leader and an emotionally willing folk is inexorably linked to the vilification and exclusion of Jews from German society. The identity of a unified German nation was predicated on the notion that the Jews were the Aryan's natural enemy and had to be eliminated on both a physical and symbolic level. The leader in communion with his faithful followers was a core concept of National Socialist doctrine, but by November 1938 even the *image* of the leader was deemed sacred and the Jews were forbidden to gaze upon this image in a movie theater with Aryan spectators.

In the night between November 9–10, 1938, National Socialists unleashed their most violent attack on the Jews to date. Commonly known as the Night of Broken Glass (*Reichskristallnacht*), this pogrom marked a decisive shift toward more intense, systematically brutal, and public demonstrations of state-mandated anti-Semitism. The government used the assassination of diplomat Ernst vom Rath in Paris by the Jew Herschel Grünsan as grounds for a fierce strike against the Jewish community. The timing of Rath's death on November 8 was fortuitous for the NSDAP because party leaders were gathered in Munich for their yearly commemoration of Hitler's unsuccessful 1923 putsch attempt. Goebbels gave an impassioned speech to the assembled party leaders, who

organized the pogrom and directed the SA throughout Germany to burn synagogues, destroy Jewish storefronts, and incarcerate some 30,000 Jews in Gestapo dungeons and concentration camps.⁵⁵

Following the Night of Broken Glass, the Nazi regime instituted a new series of anti-Semitic measures aimed at excluding Jews completely from German cultural and economic life. On November 12, 1938, three days after the pogrom and two weeks before the premiere of *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, Goebbels declared:

Since for over five years now the National Socialist state has made it possible for the Jews to create and maintain their own cultural life in special Jewish organizations, it is no longer appropriate to allow them to participate in German cultural offerings. Therefore, as of now Jews are no longer permitted entrance to such events, especially theaters, cinemas, concerts, lectures, artistic undertakings (varieties, cabarets, circus events, etc.), dance performances, and exhibitions of a cultural nature.⁵⁶

Although Jews had already been banned from employment in the film industry in 1933, they were now forbidden even to watch movies or participate at any level in communal forms of entertainment with Aryans. This total exclusion of Jews from social events, in the sense of both pleasurable and shared human experiences, marked a turning point in the persecution of the Jews and had far-reaching consequences for the social construction of happiness in Nazi Germany. The Nuremberg Laws of November 1935 had already isolated the Jews politically, socially, and emotionally. The Nuremberg Laws not only defined the Jews as a separate race lacking citizenship and political rights in Germany, they also forbade sexual intercourse and marriage between Jews and Aryans. Historians generally emphasize how these laws resulted in the Jew's political and social isolation, but they rarely give sufficient attention to how they structurally isolated the Jews in a separate emotional world. The government ban on physical and emotional intimacy between Jews and Aryans legally excluded Jews from the *Volksgemeinschaft* in the present and for future generations. As Hermann Graml rightly concludes, Jews became social lepers on the margins of German society:

The most tender and strongest and also the most important social affection which can exist between human beings not related by family, if it joined "those of German blood" and Jews, was declared a crime punishable with a prison sentence. A minority ostracized to such an extent became literally and naturally also figuratively untouchable.⁵⁷

Goebbels's decree of November 12, 1938 banning Jews from all cultural events went even further to isolate Jews in an invisible ghetto of untouchables. Jews were implicitly defined as sub-humans unfit to participate in everyday cultural events in public forums. With no legal right to enjoy

“German” entertainment, and by extension no right to “German” happiness, edification, and sublimation, Jews were effectively eliminated from the emotional life of the nation.

Hermann Göring, in his capacity as deputy of the four-year plan, was largely responsible for designing the economic sanctions against the Jews. On November 12, 1938, he declared that Jewish property owners had to pay for the pogrom’s damage, estimated at several hundred million reichsmarks, while the government was authorized to confiscate the money from insurance claims. Göring also levied a fine of a billion reichsmarks on the entire Jewish community. Further, he proclaimed that as of January 1, 1939, Jews could no longer own retail or mail-order businesses, practice trades as artisans, attend conventions or trade fairs, hold managerial positions, or be members of business associations.⁵⁸ Since the Nazi regime had already instituted countless restrictions on Jewish workers, Göring’s new measures virtually barred Jews from free participation in the German economy.

Although the government had effectively dictated that Jews were unworthy of the same social participation and happiness afforded Aryans, it was left to the cultural industry to cast the law of the land as a rewarding and universal moral value. Motion pictures held great promise for the task of creating a sense of German community and validating anti-Semitism. The historical musical in particular offered an effective formula for generating both pleasant and nostalgic sentiments, the necessary components for the enchantment of reality.

“The Refreshing Bath of Schadenfreude”:

Robert und Bertram (1939)

Robert und Bertram was the first feature film made after the Night of Broken Glass to portray Jews as cultural and economic outsiders in great detail. Hans H. Zerlett, known for his vaudeville drama *Truxa* (1937) and back-stage musical comedy *Es leuchten die Sterne* (1938), wrote and directed this musical based on Gustav Raeder’s 1856 farce *Robert und Bertram*. Raeder’s play had already enjoyed a long run on German stages and provided the material for two silent movies before Zerlett’s film premiered in Hamburg on July 7, 1939.⁵⁹ The story of two likeable vagabonds cheating the Jews had a firm tradition in Germany long before it came to the screen in the Third Reich, but it was the only anti-Semitic musical comedy made under National Socialism. Starring popular actor Rudi Godden as the debonair poet and operetta star Kurt Seifert as the down-to-earth individualist, *Robert und Bertram* casts a humorous look at German history and constitutes an image of Germans and Jews that is both engaging and ambivalent.



Stealing from the Jews: *Robert und Bertram* (1939).

While *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* highlights the ecstatic symbiosis between leader and folk, *Robert und Bertram* explores the historical opposition between the German folk and its archenemy, the Jew. Again this musical promises the chosen few: “A merry life we lead and free, a life of endless bliss!”⁶⁰ With these emblematic words from Friedrich Schiller’s *Die Räuber*, the vagabonds Robert and Bertram sing their way through 1839 Germany, stealing from the rich Jews and giving to the poor Aryans. Reminiscent of Robin Hood, Til Eulenspiegel, and a host of simple outsiders who fight for the downtrodden, Robert and Bertram break all the rules of society to serve the higher purpose of “true justice.” The title characters exist on the margins of society while helping the German community to remain intact and distanced from the Jews both culturally and economically.

The elaborate film plot is filled with many twists and turns typical of the farce. Before joining the army, Michel carves a heart into a tree for his beloved Lenchen because he is too tongue-tied to profess his true feelings out loud. Meanwhile the vagabonds and old friends Robert and Bertram are reunited in prison and escape together. They wander upon the Lips’s family inn, where they overhear Biedermeier trying to blackmail Lenchen into marrying him because her father, Mr. Lips, cannot repay his debts. The vagabonds decide to take matters into their own hands and help the family

who acted kindly toward them. They learn that Biedermeier in turn owes money to the Jewish Berlin banker Ipelmeyer.⁶¹ Disguised as the Count of Monte Cristo and his music teacher Professor Müller, the vagabonds make their way to Berlin, where they use their new identities to impress Ipelmeyer, who invites them to his home for an evening of entertainment. The vagabonds then steal the Ipelmeyer family jewels and send them to Lips so he can repay Biedermeier. If Biedermeier returns the jewels to Ipelmeyer, the Jew will be repaid with his own property and all debts will be settled. Michel returns home as a resolute soldier and man of action. He promptly takes Lenchen into his arms and pronounces them engaged. Disguised this time as women, Robert and Bertram enjoy the local festival until they are recognized and forced to escape in a hot air balloon. The vagabonds fly to heaven, where the angels greet them and all is forgiven because they have shown the greatest of all virtues: gratitude.

The title characters are fugitives from justice whose crimes include loitering, vagrancy, petty theft, grand larceny, making false statements to the police, and breaking out of prison. They are outlaws with no respect for police authority and no desire to lead an orderly life. Bertram defends their actions as those of exemplary individuals for whom normal rules do not apply: "You see, Robert, you are a washed-up genius, and I am a drop-out bourgeois, one who would rather be a tramp than a conformist."⁶² As fun-loving individualists, they roam the countryside in search of adventure and the easy life. More pranksters than hardened criminals, Robert and Bertram have little interest in money, for as they sing, "If you always have courage, what do you need with money? As a slowpoke in training you go merrily through the world."⁶³ Typical of characters in a buddy film, Robert and Bertram reject widely accepted behavioral norms and commit a series of crimes against unworthy opponents while bonding together emotionally.

As tricksters and loafers on the margins of society, Robert and Bertram belong to a long literary tradition ranging from Til Eulenspiegel to Joseph von Eichendorff's *Aus dem Leben eines Taugenichts* (1826). While their crimes against the Jews plainly correspond to anti-Semitic Nazi ideology, their non-conventional lifestyle calls into question accepted social norms, especially in regards to asocial behavior. In the context of Nazi Germany, these outlaws represent an anomaly. The National Socialist *Volksgemeinschaft* or national community was an ideal based largely on the concepts of race, work, and shared feelings. Community members were identified not only by their racially pure, healthy Aryan bodies but also by their capacity to work for the nation. From the haunting wrought iron sign "Arbeit macht frei" at the entrance to concentration camps to the obligatory National Labor Service (*Reichsarbeitsdienst*),⁶⁴ work constituted an essential aspect of everyday life in the Third Reich.

Those individuals who refused to hold down a job on a regular basis were defined as “work-shy” (*arbeitsscheu*). In 1938 the government intensified its efforts to require all able-bodied men to fulfill their duty to the community by engaging in productive activity. In a plan ostensibly to combat crime but more likely to provide labor for the arms industry, Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick directed the police to detain in preventative custody (*Vorbeugungshaft*) professional criminals, men who had no identity papers or possessed false documents, and those individuals who endangered the community by their asocial behavior, specifically beggars and tramps.⁶⁵ Based on these instructions, the Gestapo arrested some 2,000 work-shy men between April 21 and April 30, 1938. These men were deemed asocial, marked with a black triangle, and confined to the concentration camp Buchenwald. The Criminal Police Bureau likewise issued a directive to arrest all able-bodied asocial men defined as follows: “Those to be considered asocial are persons who demonstrate through their adverse behavior toward the community, which may not in itself be criminal, that they will not adapt themselves to the community.”⁶⁶ The directive specifically targeted the work-shy, vagrants, homeless, and men “who evade the duty to work.” Between June 13–18, 1938, the police undertook a nationwide action against the sub-proletarian male class, which resulted in the arrest of more than 10,000 men. “Action Work-Shy Reich” netted the government a slave workforce for the newly founded SS business enterprise “Deutsche Erde- und Steinwerke GmbH” with its intended quarries, granite mines, and brickyards at concentration camps Buchenwald, Sachsenhausen, Flossenbürg, Mauthausen, and Neuengamme.⁶⁷

Set against the backdrop of the Nazi campaign to penalize work-shy outsiders, it is not surprising that Zerlett’s film goes to great lengths to qualify the title characters’ identity and motivation. For example, before the police interrogate Robert and Bertram, Lips describes them as “two merry fellows” and is quick to add “but they aren’t vagabonds, they have to be roving minstrels or something like that. They are earning their keep by washing dishes.” The policemen confirm that these outsiders must be harmless because they are willing to wash dishes, and as they say, “that’s honest work.”⁶⁸ Lenchen thinks they are “wandering artists” and subject to a different code of behavior, one that allows more freedom based on the romantic notion of the artist as an exceptional individual. Even though Robert acknowledges “well, it’s more accurate to say we’re actually skilled wanderers,”⁶⁹ the community gathered at the Lips’s inn grants them special status.

Although Robert and Bertram are thieves, they only use what they need and return Jewish property in the end to its “rightful” Aryan owners. Their theft is justified when Ipelmeyer is unmasked as a swindler whose opulent but tasteless lifestyle is financed by stolen money. When one guest speculates that Ipelmeyer’s Berlin palace must have cost a fortune, another guest replies: “In fact it cost several fortunes, but not Mr. Ipelmeyer’s own, rather those of the

people he swindled.”⁷⁰ Although the local police issue a warrant for Robert and Bertram’s arrest, the officials recognize the inherent justice of their crimes against the Jews. The case goes before the president, the chief of police, the prime minister, and even the king because all representatives of state authority agree upon the selfless motivations and true nature of these two outsiders. The king compares the vagabonds’ harmless pranks to the serious crimes of the Jewish banker, and concludes: “The thing is, that a big crook who evades capture can become a financial councilor, while these little crooks, if they are caught, will spend a long time locked up, although their deception was not carried out for their own gain. Something is wrong here.”⁷¹

In the publicity campaign for *Robert und Bertram*, numerous critics stressed the vagabonds’ special status as exceptional individuals who are not subject to normal social constraints: “Whoever wants to be fair with them, must measure them by their own standards and not with the yardstick of bourgeois virtues. After all, normal standards only apply when it is a question of normal circumstances.”⁷² Robert and Bertram’s unlawful behavior was justified based on extenuating circumstances: “The basically harmless ‘criminals’ only steal from those people who themselves have stolen before, and they give away the spoils to the disadvantaged. They are not common but rather ‘higher’ thieves, to a certain extent, morally sanctioned thieves.”⁷³ The “higher” moral propagated here is that the theft of Jewish property is not really theft at all. Since the Jews are themselves exposed as thieves, expropriating their assets is a just and socially acceptable action.

The Tobis film studio emphasized in its press package for *Robert und Bertram* that the audience takes pleasure in the vagabonds’ lighthearted approach to work. In a surprisingly candid acknowledgment that work and regimented everyday life in Nazi Germany were emotionally debilitating, one writer observed: “Our joy in them is surely an unconscious protest against the daily drudgery of working, against the obligations that all too annoyingly regulate our existence.”⁷⁴ Another writer in the same press package argued that despite the nineteenth-century setting, the vagabonds’ work-shy attitude held an important lesson for the present. While the two loafers might have been able to get away with not working in the past, the current work ethic demanded that “Robert and Bertram would nowadays be introduced to *refreshing physical labor*.” This euphemistic phrase makes the familiar reality of forced labor in concentration camps seem harmless or even beneficial to its victims.

Robert und Bertram was advertised as a didactic piece intended specifically for an audience of *workers* and able to address their emotional needs: “Many a person who gets tired from the uniformity of daily work, whom the monotony of his task threatens to undermine, who only sees the work but can no longer see past it, he will discover delightfully in the swindler the shortcomings of human nature.” The worker needs to laugh at human failings, to relax, and to rebuild his emotional strength so he can continue to

work for the nation. "Everyone laughs at the pranks, the hilarious entanglements, the coincidences and circumstances, but he finds his way back to work." The lesson propagated in this cheerful, seemingly innocuous farce frankly echoes the widely known and cynical motto "work makes you free" etched on the gates to concentration camps: "Such a swindler drama has a moral: There is no freedom without work, or, there has to be order, or else misfortune is just around the corner."⁷⁵

Although Robert and Bertram fail to integrate themselves into society by settling down in a permanent home, starting a family, and engaging in regular work, they do offer the community a necessary service. They provide entertainment and an outlet for sentimental emotions. At the wedding reception, for example, Robert and Bertram sing a folk song and unleash a current of intense romantic feelings. These vagabonds also provide a vicarious outlet for pent-up frustrations in a highly restrictive society. They do what normal people cannot do, but often dream about doing: dropping out, neglecting responsibility, and taking what they want regardless of the consequences. Their freedom of movement is literally coupled with the joy of song and dance, so that these men exude the pleasure of life. Despite their criminal behavior, Robert and Bertram are highly sympathetic figures because their disregard for rules is tempered by a sense of humor and good will toward the Lips family.

The innkeeper Lips and his daughter Lenchen represent the most positive aspects of the German community and do not develop throughout the film narrative. Lips is and remains a loving father and an honest, hard-working small businessman trying to get on his feet. His daughter Lenchen is kind and sentimental but also resolutely intent on marrying a man worthy of her. Michel, on the other hand, undergoes a transformation preparing him for manhood and marriage. With his shoulder-length hair, knickers, and striped socks, Michel starts as a little boy in a man's body. The impression of a shy and romantic weakling is confirmed when he stutters his beloved Lenchen's name and stammers on about finding a woodpecker in the forest. In the all-male setting of the prison and army, Michel is equally childlike and inept. He stands out in the rain, apologizes when someone bumps into him, cowers in fear of the prisoners, and whines about the rigors of army life.⁷⁶ Only during military training when he finally realizes his physical strength, does his voice drop an octave and his posture become erect. Unlike his historical namesake, the "German Michel" immortalized as the apolitical citizen in his sleeping cap in countless revolutionary poems and caricatures especially around 1848, this Michel awakens from his sentimental dream world and becomes a disciplined, robust soldier. While Michel initially berates the army, he eventually recognizes "what the Prussians can do with a man."⁷⁷ If one were to focus on his statements in isolation, then his criticism of military life could be construed as subversive and directed toward regimented life under the NSDAP. However, if one considers that the disparaging comments stem from a ridiculous weakling, they tend to

carry less weight. Framed within Michel's transformation from a country bumpkin to a strapping soldier, his early criticism of the army seems unfounded. Only the initiation into a disciplined military life made it possible for this weakling to become a man and win his girl.

Set in 1839 at the height of the restoration period (1815–1848), Zerlett's film idealizes the *Volksgemeinschaft* as a harmonious rural community bound together by folk traditions and strong emotional ties. This idyllic view of the past locates *Heimat* at the Lips's family inn where the whole village comes together to celebrate a marriage. The villagers, dressed in their native costumes and dancing to traditional folk music at a wedding reception, present the picture of a simpler time when the folk was united by ritual, entertainment, and the promise of a happy future together.⁷⁸ While Raeder's original drama was set around 1856, Zerlett shifted the action to 1839, Germany's last pre-industrial period and separated by nearly a decade from the 1830 and 1848 revolutions. Zerlett thereby emphasized the stability of the restoration and disregarded its darker side: Metternich's system of secret police, denunciation, censorship, exile, and imprisonment. Rather than the infamous repressive government, Zerlett features two archetypal enemies who stand in the way of communal happiness: Biedermeier and the Jew. The character Biedermeier is named after the allegorical figure of the petty bourgeois philistine who had come to embody the entire restoration period. This smarmy, unsympathetic character wants to marry Lenchen and tries to use his financial superiority to force her consent. Biedermeier's blackmail attempt represents a sexual, social, and economic threat, but behind him stands the Jew whose corrupt business practices enable the intrigue in the first place and threaten the long-term stability of the *Volksgemeinschaft*.

Zerlett's portrayal of the Jews is based largely on stereotypes, beginning with the popular notion that Jews have hooked noses, hooved feet, a Yiddish accent, and a crude libido.⁷⁹ Bertram, for instance, correctly identifies Ipelmeyer on the street, "judging by the profile." Ipelmeyer's wife immediately recognizes her lover at the masquerade ball "by his feet."⁸⁰ And Dr. Corduan recognizes Ipelmeyer despite his costume by his Yiddish accent and lecherous gaze at the lead ballerina. Although the Jew attempts to assimilate into German society by adopting upper-class clothes and mimicking sophisticated manners, his misshapen body ultimately reveals his true identity. What separates the Jew from the Aryan is also a different moral code. For instance, Ipelmeyer considers fraud a normal trade practice and values a good business deal more than love or marital happiness. He tells fellow Jew Forchheimer, "For the last three years you have been my authorized signatory. For two years you have been stealing from me left and right. For one year you have been cheating on me with my wife. Now if even the smallest thing happens, you are fired."⁸¹ When the young bookkeeper Samuel professes his love for

Isidora, Ipelmeyer replies, "Are you meschugge? What does 'love' mean on 600 talers a year wages? My daughter will be the stepmother of a million."⁸²

The cinematic depiction of the Jew is strewn with contradictions. How are viewers expected to "read" the Jewish body as a visible racial-behavioral marker when all the Jewish characters are played by Aryan actors? Various critics attempted to resolve this dilemma by stressing that the Aryan actors playing Jews were so talented they could transform themselves to an extraordinary degree. However, the conflict is never completely resolved because the Jews share an uncanny resemblance to the Aryans. Not only Ipelmeyer and his servant Jack have difficulty with language, so does Bertram. Ipelmeyer confuses *faché* (embarrassed) with *Faschiertes* (minced meat), and mistakenly calls his daughter *the medical Venus* (die medizinische Venus) instead of the Medici Venus from Botticelli's "The Birth of Venus" (1483). The Jewish servant Jack mixes up *Zionism* and *cynicism* as well as *overture* and *Ofentür* (oven door). The Aryan Bertram displays an equally inadequate mastery of foreign words and even his native German language. Bertram not only mistakes *sublatern* for *subaltern* and *au trottoir* for *au revoir*, he also stammers *selbstmurmelnd* (muttering to yourself) instead of *selbstredend* (naturally). He is not sure how to react when he is called a *Banause* (philistine) because he does not know what *Banausentum* (cultural illiteracy) means.

Most striking, however, is that the Aryan and Jew mirror each other visually and behave in a similar manner. In three complementary sequences, Robert and Bertram interrupt collective merriment, are recognized as dangerous outsiders, and are expelled from both the Aryan and Jewish communities. At the Lips's family inn they steal Biedermeier's wallet, disturb the reception, and are chased over tables and through windows by the entire wedding party, leaving the bride and groom oblivious to the commotion and only engrossed in each other. At the Ipelmeyer home the vagabonds steal the family jewels, interrupt the festivities, and are chased from the house by the screaming guests, while Ipelmeyer sleeps unbothered. Finally, at the fair the vagabonds are recognized as escaped prisoners, thwart the fun, and are pursued by a wild crowd, while the minstrels continue their song without interruption. The similar narratives, the focus on interrupted entertainment, and the play on movement and stasis connect the Aryan and the Jew cinematically. All three scenes are characterized by rapid editing (twelve to eighteen shots in quick succession), a mobile camera at the center of the crowd, and a narrow, contained mise en scène filled with many obstacles. Even the shot of a screaming Jewish girl followed by a close-up of a screeching parrot finds its complement in the shot of an irate Aryan crowd followed by a close-up of a frenzied monkey. It is difficult to read this juxtaposition of images visually equating the frantic Jew to an animal without coming to the same conclusion for the Aryan. The most significant difference in the portrayal of the two communities is the inclusion of a commentary following the scene

at Ipelmeier's home. The camera pans away from the crowd and towards Jack as he slowly descends the stairs and walks center stage. He looks directly into the camera and says "the final gallop with Jewish haste, no?"⁸³ This self-reflective moment coupled with a popular anti-Semitic adage on Jewish haste juxtaposes skepticism and knowledge. The merger of two opposing categories of thought is ambivalent and leaves the meaning open to interpretation. Should viewers accept the widespread notion that unruly behavior or haste is a typical Jewish trait? Or is the statement made ironic through the self-reflective stance, so that viewers question the idea that the Jewish community is inherently prone to disorder and pandemonium? Or is the theatricality of the scene emphasized so that the viewers can feel like they are in on the joke?

These unresolved contradictions are also manifest in the contrast between Aryan and Jewish culture. On the surface, the cultural events depicted at the Lips's inn and the Ipelmeier home appear to demonstrate that the Aryans enjoy inherited folk music and dance, while the Jews put on airs by "borrowing" foreign classical music and ballet. However, Zerlett's use of parody makes it difficult to determine whether the ostensible differences between the two groups are real or illusionary. In a contemporary review published in *Film-Kurier*, Georg Herzberg summarized the dilemma aptly:

[Zerlett] presents a Viennese song in such a way, as if he wants to make fun of the Danube singing kitsch. And then comes something that captivates the majority of moviegoers just as it does the villagers up on the screen. Or when Rudi Godden begins an aria parody and afterwards one does not quite know whether one should laugh or take it seriously. Or a ballet whizzes by and Ursula Deinert dances the lead so well, that it is a feast for the eyes, and then the whole thing ends with a kitschy pose, and one does not know what the director actually wanted. One will have to wait it out to see if the difficult problem of parody in films can be solved with such compromises.⁸⁴

The Viennese song that Robert and Bertram sing, for example, is not a true folk song. The vagabonds make it up and con the wedding guests into believing it is real. Moreover, their performance completely changes the audience's mood from merriment to melancholy. The entire wedding party is happy until the vagabonds sing "Geh nicht wieder fort von mir," a maudlin song about a lover who begs his sweetheart not to leave him. The contrast between a happy reality and a sad art, the celebration of fulfilled love and a lament about lovers separating, creates a parody of folk traditions and kitschy notions of love. While the whole community is swept away by the sentimental pathos, Robert and Bertram use this emotional outpouring to con the guests out of their money. They acknowledge their motivation and even incorporate it into their song, singing the following lines to the same melody: "What we are singing touches you deeply. Afterwards with 'your humble servant' we'll go around collecting. Everyone will give a

penny. Only when our plate is full will our happiness be complete.”⁸⁵ With the audience weeping and literally paying for it, the vagabonds have in effect used cultural traditions to outwit the German folk.

Adolf Hitler claimed that the Jewish race “is without any true culture, and especially without any culture of its own. For what sham culture the Jew today possesses is the property of other peoples, and for the most part it is ruined in his hands.”⁸⁶ The Jew’s relationship to art and culture was, in Hitler’s words, “intellectual theft.” Zerlett’s film illustrates the Jew’s lack of native culture and his appropriation of a foreign culture that he does not understand or appreciate.

Ipelmeyer’s home becomes “a true temple of art” and a public forum where Jews can consort with British nobility who find them pleasant and with Aryan business associates who must fulfill their social obligations. The Jews use culture to enter into privileged social circles, but they do not appreciate the true value of art. The evening’s entertainment begins with an instrumental piece followed by Robert’s aria of betrayed love. While beautiful, richly dressed women and one dreamy, effeminate man listen intently to the “high” art, a Jewish guest does not understand that the song is “about a guy who had a fit with his lover.”⁸⁷ In contrast to the earlier Viennese song, the aria tells the story of a scorned lover who gets drunk and decides that he does not need his paramour after all. Robert made up both the folk song and the aria by merely adopting the style appropriate for each audience. Both songs are parodies but their sentiments and the audience’s reaction to them seem to define the Aryan and Jewish communities as different entities. While the “folk song” expressed unrequited but enduring love and moved the Aryan audience to tears, the sophisticated “aria” voices a base sentiment and fails to unite the mixed public of Jews and Aryans in a shared emotional state. The ballet also seems to unleash more sexual energy than artistic interest among the Jews. During the dance performance, Forchheimer makes a pass at Mrs. Ipelmeyer, Samuel tries to seduce Isidora, and Dr. Corduan (alias Dr. Caftan) and Ipelmeyer both cast a lustful eye at the lead ballerina.⁸⁸ Finally, in contrast to the joyous and methodic folk dance performed at the Aryan wedding reception, the gallop dance at the Jew’s party is a wild and chaotic release, the perfect setting for the crime that follows. The Jew’s unrestrained merriment creates a fertile environment for Robert and Bertram to steal without notice.

Anti-Semitic rhetoric claims that assimilated Jews masquerade as Aryans to gain access to German society, but here it is the Aryans who disguise themselves in the trappings of aristocratic and academic authority to gain access to Jewish society. Robert and Bertram come to the Ipelmeyer home disguised as the Count of Monte Cristo and his music teacher Professor Müller. Are the Aryans outwitting the Jews at their own game or is this merely another example of how the Aryan and the Jew resemble each other? At the costume ball held later in the evening, the Ipelmeyers adopt costumes that illustrate their ridicu-

lous desire to be powerful rulers of foreign cultures that they do not understand. Jack comments that Mr. Ipelmeyer masquerades as “Louis Quartose the fifteenth,” his wife as Madame Pompadour, “but she looks like an old sack” and his daughter Isidora as “Queen Kleptomania,” alias Cleopatra.⁸⁹ Samuel the Jewish bookkeeper likewise tries to adopt the identity of a powerful, honorable knight by donning a suit of armor, but he cannot walk in it, let alone fight or make love when the opportunities arise.

After Robert and Bertram have demonstrated that the Jews are guilty of intellectual and financial theft and therefore deserve to be expropriated, the vagabonds’ narrative function becomes tenuous. Because they have rectified a perceived injustice and fulfilled their role as unlawful agents of a higher morality, their own status as outsiders is called into question. In a series of seemingly unconnected episodes, they are literally made unreal, extrapolated from the narrative, and eliminated from the picture.

While the king decides their legal fate, Robert and Bertram admire a sculpture garden behind a barred fence and exchange the following dialogue:

BERTRAM: You see, Robert, that’s life. Everywhere bars, the only difference is that the one looks out through the bars and the other looks in. I’d rather look out.

ROBERT: Well, then just let ‘em lock you up again.

BERTRAM: Oh, you just don’t have any imagination.⁹⁰

Bertram recognizes that life itself is a prison. Whether one looks out or in, everyone is confined by socially proscribed boundaries. The advantage to being locked up is that the view is better. This farcical view of incarceration as something inevitable and even desirable helps the viewer accept the vagabonds’ fate, but it also trivializes the incarceration of asocials in concentration camps, a very real political action that was occurring on a daily basis in Nazi Germany. The viewer is explicitly encouraged to draw parallels between the past and present. In the same scene, the vagabonds read a newspaper, and the headlines characterize political events in the nineteenth century that bare a remarkable resemblance to those in the twentieth century. When 1839 looks like 1939, seeing a past where work-shy outsiders actually want to be locked up makes it easier for viewers to fantasize a harmless version of the present where asocials want to be put away for their own good.

Visually restrained by bars and reconciled or even happily awaiting imprisonment, Robert and Bertram fall asleep and are transformed into the mythical figures Bacchus and Mercury from the sculpture garden. The transition from reality to dream and myth helps to decontextualize the vagabonds from the narrative and remove them from a social environment in which they can no longer justifiably roam unrestricted. This transition also establishes a utopian bond between the vagabonds, but could just as easily describe the

chimerical bond between the audience and the sympathetic anti-heroes. Robert and Bertram appear in each other's dreams and joyfully proclaim: "Hear us, you gods, through time and space, we are one soul, one heart, one dream."⁹¹ Just as in *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, *Robert and Bertram* reveals "what utopia would feel like rather than how it would be organized" (Dyer). Viewers again experience a utopian vision of the nineteenth century as a realm in which time and space have no meaning, normal boundaries are overcome, and feelings bind people together more than any social institutions ever could. The utopian goal of spiritual unity is possible in a shared dream world so very similar to the experience of watching a movie in a crowded cinema. In this nexus of dream, myth, and movie, the characters and the audience share a powerful collective fantasy and emotional life.

In a further transformation, Robert and Bertram disguise themselves as countrywomen and appear at the carnival. Even this place on the edge of society, where libidinous energy is given a controlled release, cannot contain them. Emasculated and now fully stripped of their last vestige of potential male productivity, the vagabonds need to be removed from the narrative. They escape capture in a hot air balloon and fly to heaven while still alive, but as Robert reassures Bertram: "Don't bother yourself about it, we couldn't have expected very much from earthly justice anyway."⁹² The asocials who have nothing to contribute to the work of the nation are delivered to a place from which they can never leave. The cinematic treatment of asocials, their willing expulsion from the *Volksgemeinschaft* to a place of eternal happiness, trains the audience to translate a real-life horror into reassuring images of contentment and order. *Robert und Bertram* ends with the enormous solid metal gates of heaven closing, locking the vagabonds safely away and signaling to the audience both the film's conclusion and the inevitable final solution for outsiders. The last image of impenetrable borders covering the entire screen suggests a finality so complete that there is no escape, and both the characters and the audience are locked into this course of action to protect the community. The ridiculous idea of going to heaven while still alive is made to seem completely logical. The absurdity inherent in the farce as a genre allows the audience simultaneously to accept and deny the existence of death and imprisonment as the punishment for non-conformity.

Some confusion, however, exists over the film's conclusion. Both Dorothea Hollstein and Linda Schulte-Sasse have incorrectly argued that *Robert und Bertram* was reshot with a different ending during the Second World War. Schulte-Sasse maintains: "The vagabonds are forcibly reintegrated into the social order in 1942, when the film's ending was changed to show them entering military service under the command of Michel — a move justified by the need to sustain the public's military morale."⁹³ I could find no evidence that Zerlett's film was actually reshot and only one publicity brochure that describes this alternate ending. *Das Programm von heute* 385

claims: "The film's conclusion does not seem to us like retaliation: Robert and Bertram stand neatly in a row as strapping soldiers and Michel commands them to the front: 'Right shoulder arms! Company march!'"⁹⁴ By contrast, the brochures *Illustrierter Film-Kurier* and *Lockende Leinwand*, the extensive press package, the advertising guidebook for theater owners, and the censor cards from both 1939 and 1943 contain no mention of the reputed altered ending.⁹⁵ Since the brochure in question, *Das Programm von heute* 385, is printed with the copyright date of 1938, the alternative ending is most likely a pre-war suggestion never actualized despite its rather prophetic vision. And since star Rudi Godden died unexpectedly at the age of thirty-four on January 4, 1941, it is even more unlikely that the film was ever reshot with a new ending for a reprise in February of 1942.⁹⁶

Robert und Bertram received mixed reviews. *Der deutsche Film* was notably harsh, stating that the story had "far too many mothballs" and that the film could "in no way be called completely successful."⁹⁷ The portrayal of the Jews was particularly controversial, and the different opinions hinged on whether the reviewers found the characters realistic or not. In a review published in *Film-Kurier*, Georg Herzberg applauded Zerlett's musical because "for the first time ever in a film Jewry becomes the target of a convincingly effective ridicule."⁹⁸ Writing for *Licht-Bild-Bühne*, Albert Schneider also praised actors Herbert Hübner, Inge van der Straaten, and Tatjana Sais for depicting so well "the Jewish milieu in all its ridiculousness." What Schneider wanted, however, was "a single visible piece of evidence showing how dangerous the typical stock market speculator is." Rather than criticize the film for its failure to show the Jewish threat in a realistic manner, Schneider suggested that the viewer "take the film for what it wants to be: a folk play with heart and soul, and sentimentality, with beautiful songs and lively performances."⁹⁹

Several other reviewers considered the film a realistic portrayal of the historical Jewish threat to German society. Reiterating standard anti-Semitic fare that Jews are cultural parasites, one critic asserted: "the festival in [Ipelmeyer's] magnificent palace *crawling with the uncultured* contains tidbits of superior humor . . . and at the same time it paints a picture of the time and customs: the way in which the East-Galician even then tried to win the right of abode in Berlin and sought to confuse the souls with money and philanthropy."¹⁰⁰ In his review for *Licht-Bild-Bühne*, Mario Heil de Brentani voiced the most vehemently anti-Semitic rhetoric and drew from nineteenth-century fiction explicit parallels to the Nazi present: "Gustav Raeder depicted the unscrupulous profiteer Ipelmeyer as the model for thousands, and he foresaw therein our own violent reckoning a hundred years later with all those who put self-interest before the common good." The "violent reckoning" of *Kristallnacht*, the brutality of concentration camps, and the inhumane persecution of Jews on a daily basis finds its justification in a century-old musical farce. Brentani echoes the simplistic anti-Semitic discourse found on the pages of the notorious news-

paper *Der Stürmer* and *Mein Kampf*, when he argues that the vagabonds help “liberate the community completely from the disguised parasites.”¹⁰¹

Reporter H. J. Hahn had visited the studio during the filming of *Robert und Bertram* and predicted audiences would like the film because the Jews get their comeuppance. Hahn asserted: “We leave the ‘Israeli’ paradise and look forward to being able to see for ourselves in the finished film, how the two shrewd vagabonds manage to outwit completely the Ipelmeyer family who think they are so clever and infallible.”¹⁰² It was exactly the film’s ability to fulfill the audience’s need for *Schadenfreude* (finding joy in other people’s pain) that was highlighted in the advertising campaign. The Tobis studio advised theater owners to broadcast that “we have here *Schadenfreude* in its most harmless form. And as the saying goes, *Schadenfreude* is a sheer delight that everyone enjoys gladly and without hesitation. So get into the refreshing bath of genuine cheerfulness, the great German film farce of Tobis, *Robert und Bertram*.”¹⁰³ According to this advertising campaign for a motion picture produced under a highly restrictive state censor, happiness in Nazi Germany proudly embraced the “harmless” fun of watching others suffer.

The musical farce is based on a light-hearted, cheerful worldview, in which nonsensical events take place and problems are resolved with no effort or by completely unbelievable circumstances. Happy and carefree people populate the silly and harmless world of the farce. This philosophy has serious consequences when applied to the absurd and unbelievable aspects of everyday life in Nazi Germany. *Robert und Bertram* frames the expropriation of Jewish property as socially just, fun, and within a historical tradition, and the studio publicly stated that it wanted viewers to draw parallels to the contemporary treatment of Jews in Germany. In a similar manner, the film shows how asocials are literally eliminated from the picture and imprisoned in a place imagined as paradise, while the publicity campaign spells out how central work is to the identity of the national community. This musical farce trains viewers to hum the pleasant tunes, adopt the carefree attitude, revisit the calming or funny images, and adjust one’s mind to the notion that the absurd, no matter how unbelievable, is part of everyday reality in the Third Reich.

History via the Musical

History is constantly revised and retold, not just in conversations at the dinner table or in academic textbooks but also in motion pictures. Each of these venues lays varying claims to authenticity, but motion pictures hold a special place in the collective imagination due to their audio-visual component and narrative capacity to make viewers feel like they are “there” reliving the past. Following the adage “seeing is believing,” films can seem real and truthful despite the fact that they are human constructs. The labels “historical

drama,” “based on a true story,” or even “freely adapted” lend credibility and can raise a film to the status of historical truth, effacing the conscious acts of selection, arrangement, and control necessary for its production.

Film scholars have long recognized that serious historical films like *Der höhere Befehl* (1935), *Ohm Krüger* (1941), *Bismarck* (1940), *Die Entlassung* (1942), *Der unendliche Weg* (1943), and *Kolberg* (1945) sought to portray the historical struggle for national identity and sovereignty as a guidepost for a similar political agenda in Nazi Germany. As Klaus Kanzog has cogently argued: “The viewer was supposed to come to the conclusion that what was aspired to in the past and already accomplished, what was lost and had to be fought for again, has come true in the present. Furthermore, the historical analogy to the present was supposed to be found in positive examples.”¹⁰⁴

The past as a mirror to the present, cinematic history as a means to see the contemporary world more clearly, seems to be a dictum that scholars are most comfortable ascribing to the serious historical film. Although many critics maintain that propaganda films like *Kolberg* use the past to illustrate National Socialist fantasies of community, nation, and leader, few have considered the extent to which the historical musical contributed to the same discursive tradition. Despite the fact that many German operetta films and musicals made in the 1930s and 1940s prominently featured historical settings, most critics claim that these popular and “light” genres use the past as a form of escapism. This line of thinking stems in part from commonly held views on what audiences expect from different genres. Francesco Bono represents the prevailing critical stance when he states:

The operetta and the historical film have this in common: both use history as the premise for a spectacle, in order to impress the public with the splendor and exoticism of the scenes; they attempt to conjure up on screen the atmosphere of an epoch. However, the historical film proposes to narrate a piece of history “faithfully” (and the viewer expects that it will be so), while the operetta film treats it freely. What it narrates does not have to be true. It neither presents itself as truth, nor does the public count on that. In the operetta film, history is pliable it takes the form that one gives it.¹⁰⁵

Do audiences look to serious dramas like *Kolberg* for lessons in history? Do they anticipate that the musical will not deliver “real” history but rather only historical atmosphere? In general the tone of a film, whether it is earnest or light-hearted, may well determine audience expectations before they go to the box office. However, several factors can influence how viewers approach a film and how they regard drama as history and the musical as fiction. In the case of *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, the Tobis studio launched a rigorous advertising campaign to convince audiences that this film contained equal amounts of history and music. The casting of respected actor and cultural dignitary Gustaf

Gründgens in the star role together with Hans Steinhoff, a director known for his propaganda films *Hitlerjunge Quex* and *Der alte und der junge König*, lent credibility to the film's depiction of history via music. The Tobis studio press package for *Robert und Bertram* likewise presented this musical farce as a hybrid genre that used a playful stance and musical interludes but nonetheless told an important historical truth.

One aspect of *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* and *Robert und Bertram* has long been overlooked; they belong to a larger category of films produced in Nazi Germany and set in the nineteenth century. Both filmmakers and audiences seem to have been captivated by this historical period because it forms the background for countless popular films spanning nearly all genres. Whether state-commissioned propaganda films, historical pageants, love stories, operettas, or historical musicals, German films used the nineteenth century to recount a shared past as the basis on which to forge a personal and national identity in the present. Many scholars, most notably Linda Schulte-Sasse, have explored how the eighteenth century came to embody in Nazi Germany the "notion of a social body whose harmony is impeded by modernity's alienation."¹⁰⁶ I suggest that motion pictures set in the nineteenth century have a different and equally noteworthy agenda. Whereas the eighteenth century is the locus of cultural myths attesting to German identity, the nineteenth century represents Germany's arduous political struggle for nationhood. Filmmakers turned to nineteenth-century history and literature for a familiar discursive tradition on which to model notions of community, nation, the enemy, and the leader.

Nineteenth-century writers such as Storm, Nestroy, Kleist, Fontane, Keller, and Pushkin delivered the material for the films *Der Schimmelreiter* (1934) and *Immensee* (1943), *Lumpacivagabundus* (1937), *Der zerbrochene Krug* (1937), *Der Schritt vom Wege* [*Effi Briest*] (1939), *Kleider machen Leute* (1940), and *Der Postmeister* (1940) respectively. The lives of nineteenth-century artists were also depicted with great frequency: Tchaikovsky in *Es war eine rauschende Ballnacht* (1939), the Strauß family in *Unsterbliche Walzer* (1939), operetta director Franz Jauner in *Operette* (1940), writer Hans Christian Andersen and singer Jenny Linden in *Die schwedische Nachtigall* (1941), dramatist Ferdinand Raimund in *Brüderlein fein* (1942), and composer Carl Michael Ziehrer in *Wiener Mädeln* (1945/1949). The operetta film (generally distinguished from the historical musical because it is most often set in nineteenth-century Vienna and employs well-known melodies) was especially popular with the movie-going public.¹⁰⁷ Numerous classic operettas were brought to the screen: Johann Strauß's *Eine Nacht in Venedig* (1934) and *Der Zigeunerbaron* (1935), Franz von Suppé's *Boccaccio* (1936), and Karl Millöcker's *Der Bettelstudent* (1936) and *Gasparone* (1937). Finally, the nineteenth century served as the backdrop for historical

musicals ranging from the late Weimar film classic *Der Kongreß tanzt* (1931) to *Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten* (1941).¹⁰⁸

Most German historical musicals, especially those featuring popular female stars, revolve around a love affair and emphasize marriage as the fulfillment of individual desire and the means to social harmony. In his seminal article "Visual Pleasure Inhibited," Karsten Witte argues that the 1930s Hollywood musical and the German revue film tell strikingly different stories that reflect their national self-image in crisis: "musicals deal with fantasies of social climbing while the revue film takes up wedding fantasies."¹⁰⁹ The musical evokes the deeply rooted American fear of unemployment in the aftermath of the Great Depression. By contrast, the revue film addresses the German fear of liberty as a reaction against the Weimar Republic's decadence. Both the Hollywood musical and the German revue film, as Witte has described them, are backstage musicals that share a contemporary urban setting in the theater or film studio. Although Witte does not discuss the German historical musical as a sub-genre, his thesis holds true for many films in this category such as *Frauen sind doch bessere Diplomaten* (1941), a marriage fantasy starring Marika Röck and set in the late Biedermeier period. What separates *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* and *Robert und Bertram* from other historical musicals of the 1930s and 1940s is that they star male performers and center on the leader and community rather than the heterosexual couple.

Tanz auf dem Vulkan and *Robert und Bertram* share a utopian view of the nineteenth century as a realm where communal happiness was still a real possibility. Whether it is a tale of the artist who leads the nation in ecstatic bliss or one of carefree outsiders who unite the people by foiling their enemies, these stories use history to recapture a sense of longing and belonging lost in the present. This aspect of the musical illustrates particularly well the concept of *Ungleichzeitigkeit* (non-synchronicity) that Ernst Bloch developed in his monumental study on National Socialism, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit* (Heritage of Our Times, 1935). Bloch recognized that "we are not all in the same Now," and that "we carry with us much of earlier times which interferes" with the present.¹¹⁰ Unlike Marxism, National Socialism embraced the continued existence of the past in the present or non-synchronicity as a political strategy because it satisfied "the undercurrent of very old dreams."¹¹¹ Bloch argued that National Socialism succeeded precisely because it faithfully conjured up past visions of utopian, primitive desires to fulfill the nation's current unsatisfied emotional needs. He asserted, "It is not the 'theory' of the National Socialists but rather their energy that is serious, the fanatical-religious strain that does not merely stem from despair and stupidity, the strangely roused strength of faith."¹¹²

Bloch was among the first observers to note that the NSDAP was not merely a band of thugs governing through terror and coercion; the party also gave the nation much of what it wanted. Products of pop culture like histori-

cal musicals unabashedly sought to fulfill the audience's desire for a simpler existence, one in which the individual is connected to others by shared values, a common cultural heritage, and mutual recognition as vital, passionate human beings. The historical musical in the Third Reich invited the audience to recall the familiar collective memory of a good society lost and momentarily regained in the world of cinema. *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* and *Robert und Bertram* form a cross-section of social aspirations, ranging from the promise of elegance in the great metropolis Paris to the security of small-town life in Biedermeier Germany.

Paris, the city of lights, represents a place of extraordinary architectural beauty permeated by the elusive atmosphere of refinement, ease, and enjoyment of the best things in life. The Paris of 1830 is especially attractive because it witnessed armed rebellion and the toppling of a regime while still retaining the monarchy in the hybrid form of a "Bourgeois King." This non-synchronicity, when the ancien régime coexisted with the modern age after the French Revolution, speaks to the dream of a good society in which complex issues of political change are resolved by personality and *Lebensphilosophie*. The figures populating the world of 1830 Paris employ life strategies to deal successfully with a harsh political environment and offer important lessons for viewers in 1938. In many ways Debureau reflects the Nazi concept of the leader as a genius who voices the nation's inner needs and generates a contagious mass intoxication. His call to maintain nearly ecstatic levels of enthusiasm and to accept freedom of emotion and thought rather than action places his political platform in line with both the German tradition of *Gedankenfreiheit* and National Socialism. However, he uses the weapons of satire, underground pamphlets, and inner resistance to combat an oppressive police state, which makes him an appealing counterculture hero for viewers who opposed National Socialism and saw parallels between a brutal regime in 1830 Paris and 1938 Germany.

More than nineteenth-century France, nineteenth-century Germany connotes a period of continual political transformations and extremes; the end of the Holy Roman Empire German Nation (800–1806), the Napoleonic Wars, the creation of the German Union (Deutscher Bund, 1815–1871), the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, and the founding of the Second Empire (1871–1918). Nineteenth-century German history is generally read as a rocky but inevitable path to nationhood marked by the stations of feudalism, foreign sovereignty, and a patchwork of states in loose association but ending with the dream come true: the recovery of a lost empire. *Robert und Bertram* is situated in 1839, halfway between the first two empires and exactly a century from the original audience's present in the third empire. It thus evokes the memory of a lost paradise regained, a sense of communal wholeness and happiness, glimpses of which only really existed in the wishful thinking of Biedermeier fiction.

Germany in 1839, with its geographical coordinates between the Spreewald village and metropolis Berlin, is the stage for a morality play pitting the heartless exploitation of capitalism against authentic, peaceful coexistence of feudalism. Commonly known as either the Age of Metternich (stressing the prime minister's use of dictatorial power to enforce conformity) or as the Biedermeier period (named after the allegorical figure of the German everyman who retreats into the private sphere), 1815–1848 was characterized by radical change. This period saw the construction of the first German railroad line from Nuremberg to Fürth (1835), the invention of the steamship and electric telegraph, and the shift from a largely agricultural economy to one of manufacture. Rather than celebrating modernity, urbanization, and technology, the visual arts, literature, and fashion of the day turned inward, retreating into the family and domestic concerns. As much a reaction to the repressive political regime as the unsettling cultural changes, the early decades of the nineteenth century venerated the small world of hearth and home and envisioned a stable, traditional, and secure world even as it vanished. Germany in 1839, like Paris in 1830, was a period of contrasts in which the average citizen felt powerless against the oppressive political regime and withdrew into the private realm.

Tanz auf dem Vulkan and *Robert und Bertram* used the nineteenth century in two complementary ways, to construct nationhood and to promote a mutually beneficial posture toward totalitarianism. The nineteenth century became a backdrop for National Socialist notions of the leader, national community, work, Aryan superiority, and the Jewish threat, but the historical analogy also served to promote tolerance of a tyrannical system in exchange for social happiness. In the historical musical, the nation was built upon community, which in turn was held together by a strong leader and collective happiness defined as both intoxication and *Schadenfreude*. The idea of a nation predicated on a dictatorial leader who eliminated all opposition but guaranteed its citizens happiness could serve as a model for viewers in Nazi Germany. The musical's use of satire and parody allowed subversive readings but their inherently ambiguous structure required that protest remain on the level of thought. Humor could give individuals a release valve for frustration without actually threatening the status quo.

Not only historical documents but also popular forms of entertainment help to shape perceptions of the past. Whereas serious historical dramas often focus on the lives of famous public figures and great deeds, the musical can address a different type of history, the intangible realm of emotion and social values. It would be misguided to assume that the musical is pure escapism and that the propaganda ministry merely favored it because it would distract the audience from the hardship of everyday life. National Socialism repeatedly harnessed for its political agenda the nostalgic view of the past as the "good old days." Nostalgia originally referred to the sorrow of being sepa-

rated from a familiar but lost place rather than a time, and reflects the search for a spiritual *home* in the past, one that offers the emotional security missing in the present. In our nostalgia for a simpler time, we often seek an existence not too distant from our own, familiar but just out of reach. This need for distance and proximity may explain why audiences in 1938–39 were fascinated by the nineteenth century, an age Walter Benjamin characterized as “a time period (a time dream)” [“ein Zeitraum (ein Zeit-traum)”].¹¹³ The collective dream of the good old days is captured in the movies, and though the movie must end, the dream and the music remain a vivid reminder of utopia. As the popular song from *Der Kongreß tanzt* (1931) goes: “It only happens once, it’ll never come again.”¹¹⁴ The historical musical’s greatest appeal may be that it mourns the loss of the past even as it recreates it, beckoning the audience to imprint the sounds and images of the past in their mind to recapture a sense of communal happiness.

Notes

¹ Carla Rhode aptly summarizes the widely held view that the Nazi musical served a political purpose by distracting the viewer from everyday reality. The musical, she writes, “consciously avoided any realistic portrayal of reality, instead one escaped into the illusory world of artists and variety performers infused with a stereotypical propaganda value system.” [Bewußt wurde die realistische Schilderung der Wirklichkeit vermieden, man flüchtete sich vielmehr in die illusionistisch gesehene Welt der Künstler und Artisten und versah sie reichlich mit Klischees der propagierten Wertvorstellungen.]. Carla Rhode, “Leuchtende Sterne?” in *Wir tanzen um die Welt: Deutsche Revuefilme 1933–1945*, ed. Helga Belach (Munich: Carl Hanser, 1979), 119. For a more nuanced assessment of the musical genre, see Rick Altman, *The American Film Musical* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987); Jane Feuer, *The Hollywood Musical*, 2d ed. (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1993); and Thomas H. Schatz, *Hollywood Genres: Formula, Film Making, and the Studio System* (New York: Random House, 1981).

² Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, trans. Ralph Manheim (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1971), 167. “[D]aß die Begeisterung, erst einmal geknickt, nicht mehr nach Bedarf zu erwecken ist. Sie ist ein Rausch und ist in diesem Zustande weiter zu erhalten. Wie aber sollte man ohne diese Macht der Begeisterung einen Kampf bestehen, der nach menschlichem Ermessen die ungeheuersten Anforderungen an die seelischen Eigenschaften der Nation stellen würde?” Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Munich: Franz Eher, 1935), 2:183–84.

³ Richard Dyer, *Only Entertainment* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 18.

⁴ Hayden White, “Historiography and Historiophoty,” *American Historical Review* 93.5 (December 1988): 1193.

⁵ Born into a Bohemian family of acrobats, Jean-Baptiste-Gaspard Debureau (1796–1846, original name Jan Kaspar Dvorák) performed throughout Europe until he joined the troupe at Paris’s Théâtre des Funambules. This theater was located on the Boulevard du Temple, a thoroughfare on Paris’s right bank known for its numerous theaters catering to mostly lower class audiences and offering pantomime, acrobatics,

puppet shows, animals acts, and melodrama. Nicknamed the Boulevard of Crime because of all the crimes staged in the countless melodramas, “this original Boulevard was a barbarian purlieu, a foil to classical France, a subliminal zone where popular forms — forms outgrown and despised — survived unofficially,” Frederick Brown, *Theater and Revolution: The Culture of the French Stage* (New York: Viking Press, 1980), 42. Deburau became famous as a white-faced mime dressed in a baggy white costume with a black skullcap and was the star attraction on the Boulevard of Crime from 1830 to 1840. He was immortalized as the optimistic and lovelorn Pierrot in the classic French film *Les Enfants du paradis* (premiere: March 9, 1945). The mime’s name occurs with various spellings, but I will retain the name “Deburau” for the famous personality and “Debureau” for the cinematic figure in *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*.

⁶ Hans Rehberg was well known for his Prussian dramas celebrating the life of Frederick the Great including *Der siebenjährige Krieg*, which premiered on April 7, 1938 at the Schauspielhaus and starred Gustaf Gründgens. Peter Hagen was the pen name of Willi Krause, the Reich Film Dramaturge from 1933 to 1936.

⁷ See *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, Censor-Card 49884, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. In this case, the censor cards include not only the censor’s approval and rating but also the entire film dialogue. The original screenplay is available at the Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen “Konrad Wolf” Potsdam-Babelsberg library, see Hans Rehberg, Hans Steinhoff, and Peter Hagen, *Wenn Debureau spielt . . . Arbeitstitel* (Filmscript, Majestic Film: Berlin, n.d.).

⁸ Compare Curt Riess, *Das gab’s nur einmal: Das Buch der schönsten Filme unseres Lebens*, 2d rev. ed. (Hamburg: Verlag der Sternbücher, 1956), 716.

⁹ Compare Heinrich Goertz, *Gustaf Gründgens* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1982), 91; and Friedrich Luft, “Gründgens und der Film,” in *Gründgens: Schauspieler, Regisseur, Theaterleiter*, ed. Henning Rischbieter (Velber bei Hannover: Erhard Friedrich, 1963), 32.

¹⁰ Compare Volker Kühn, “Man muß das Leben nehmen, wie es eben ist . . .” Anmerkungen zum Schlager und seiner Fähigkeit, mit der Zeit zu gehen,” in *Musik und Musikpolitik im faschistischen Deutschland*, eds. Hanns Werner Heister and Hans-Günter Klein (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1984), 233; and Christa Bandmann and Joe Hembus, “Tanz auf dem Vulkan,” in *Klassiker des deutschen Tonfilms, 1930–1960* (Munich: Goldmann, 1980), 118.

¹¹ “Sonderreklame — die notwendig ist! Werbung durch Musik!” *Tanz auf dem Vulkan: Reklame-Ratschläge* (Berlin: Tobis Filmkunst GmbH, n.d.), 19, *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, Document file 16695, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

¹² “Grammophon — Die Stimme seines Herrn bringt das faszinierende Schlagerlied von Mackeben ‘Die Nacht ist nicht allein zum Schlafen da’ aus dem Film *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, gespielt von Egon Kaiser, Refraingesang: Heyn-Quartett aus,” “Film-musik auf Schallplatten,” *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 12 (June 1939): 360.

¹³ Bogusław Drewniak, *Der deutsche Film 1938–1945: Ein Gesamtüberblick* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1987), 201, 634.

¹⁴ Goebbels’s diary entry for November 18, 1938, reads: “Ein typischer Gründgens: Gehirnarbeit wird ein bißchen zuviel getan. Muß noch sehr geschnitten werden.”

Joseph Goebbels, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, ed. Elke Fröhlich, Part I: Aufzeichnungen 1924–1942, 9 vols. (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1998), I. 6: 191.

¹⁵ Michael Töteberg, “Gustaf Gründgens,” *Cinegraph: Lexikon zum deutschsprachigen Film*, ed. Hans Michael Bock (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1984ff.), E4.

¹⁶ Gerd Albrecht reports that *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* cost 1,423,000 DM to produce and returned an estimated 1,100,000 DM at the box office, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik: Eine soziologische Untersuchung über die Spielfilme des Dritten Reiches* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1969), 428. According to Albrecht, *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* was enthusiastically received by critics and audiences alike despite its poor financial showing (267–68). The estimated financial loss may reflect the excessively high cost of producing a costume drama with a star-studded cast rather than a box office failure. The trade papers advertised *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* as one of the three most successful Tobis films of 1938; see *Film-Kurier* 24 (January 28, 1939). *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* reportedly had a successful run at the box office in Berlin and Vienna, see *Film-Kurier* 28 (February 2, 1939). A survey six months after the premiere confirmed that *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* was considered one of the most impressive films in recent memory, *Film-Kurier* 147 (June 28, 1939).

¹⁷ The film continues to find a popular audience in its video format. Gründgens’s rendition of the film’s main song “Die Nacht ist nicht allein zum Schlafen da” also appears in countless evergreen CDs on the market in Germany today.

¹⁸ For an informative study of Hans Steinhoff’s early musical career, see Horst Claus, “Von Gilbert zu Goebbels: Hans Steinhoff zwischen Operette und Tonfilm mit Musik,” in *Als die Filme singen lernten: Innovation und Tradition im Musikfilm 1928–1938*, eds. Malte Hagener and Jan Hans (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1999), 105–20. Steinhoff reported that it took him fifteen years to bring the Debureau material to the screen, in part because he insisted that Gründgens play the title role. Hans Steinhoff, “Meine Filmarbeit mit Gustaf Gründgens,” *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 188 (August 12, 1938).

¹⁹ Between 1933 and 1941 Gustaf Gründgens had fourteen film roles and directed four films. In 1938 Terra studio created “Gründgens Production Group” with an agreement for him to make two films a year, one as director and one as the star. Gründgens was among the top six highest paid film actors and top seven directors, earning 80,000 RM for each film.

²⁰ Goebbels wrote in his diary on July 29, 1937, that Hitler “is of the opinion that Gründgens has to go away completely” (Ist der Meinung, daß Gründgens ganz weg muß). *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, I. 3: 216. Goebbels wrote on August 17, 1941: “The Führer does not like Gustaf Gründgens. He finds him too unmanly. He is of the opinion that one should not under any circumstances tolerate homosexuality in public life” [Der Führer mag Gustaf Gründgens nicht. Er ist ihm zu unmännlich. Seine Ansicht geht dahin, daß man im öffentlichen Leben unter keinen Umständen die Homosexualität dulden darf]. Joseph Goebbels, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, ed. Elke Fröhlich, Part II: Diktate 1941–1945, 15 vols. (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1998), II. 1: 272.

²¹ “TANZ AUF DEM VULKAN (1938) hieß ein Spielfilm von Hans Steinhoff, und nur wegen des beziehungsreichen Titels übernahm Gründgens in ihm die Rolle des politisierenden Schauspielers Debureau.” Töteberg, “Gustaf Gründgens,” E3.

²² "In dem Film ist alles drin' . . . Liebe, Politik und Theater. Debureau ist ein ungeheuer leidenschaftlicher Mensch, dessen Leben einen großen abenteuerlichen Atem hat. . . . Mich reizte vor allem die große romantische Geste dieses Lebens." "Gründgens im Gespräch," *B.Z. am Mittag* (June 20, 1938).

²³ Gründgens worked with Steinhoff in *Eine Frau ohne Bedeutung* (1936); composer Theo Mackeben in *Die Finanzen des Großherzogs* (1934) and *Pygmalion* (1935); and cameraman Ewald Daub in *Die Finanzen des Großherzogs* and *Eine Frau ohne Bedeutung*. Set designer Rochus Gliese, screenwriter Hans Rehberg, actors Theo Lingen, Erich Ziegel, Franz Weber, and Walter Werner all belonged to the ensemble at Gründgens's Schauspielhaus am Gendarmenmarkt.

²⁴ "So brauchen wir also unsere Träume und Wünsche, das Hinaufschauen zu den Sternen, zu dem Höheren, Schöneren, Reicherem, zu Vor- und Traumbildern keineswegs nur als Zeitverschwendung, als erfolgsfeindliche Entnervung zu betrachten." Hans Spielhofer, "Wunschtraum oder Wirklichkeit? Eine Betrachtung über Notwendigkeit und Problematik ihrer Abgrenzung," *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 11 (May 1939): 320–21.

²⁵ "Der Name des Stars verrät alles. Er sagt aus, ob es sich um einen burlesken Film handelt oder um einen ernsten, ob getanzt und gesungen wird oder ob es gutbürgerlich lustig hergeht. Kurz: der Name des Stars stellt ein 'Genre' dar!" Helmut Kindler, "Star als Genre," *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 12 (June 1939): 340.

²⁶ "Und während der große Akteur der Juli-Revolution sich immer stärker in Erregung spricht, spüren wir die geschichtliche Bedeutung des Augenblicks, die unter Hans Steinhoffs Regie klar zum Ausdruck kommt: Paris und damit Frankreich standen in jenen Tagen an der Wende zweier Zeitalter. . . . Diese eindrucksvolle Geschichtsepisode, die wir hier in einer Pariser alten Straße nächstens erlebten, erhält Charakter und Prägung durch das Spiel von Gustaf Gründgens, der gerade in dieser Szene in der er als Debureau den Prinzen von Orléan zu spielen hat, zeigt, welche Kraft der Verwandlung in seinem Spiel ist, eine Kraft der Verwandlung, die so suggestiv ist, daß wir nicht mehr ein Spiel der Ereignisse, sondern die Ereignisse selbst zu erleben glauben." Felix Henseleit, "Szene zwischen Zeitaltern: Nachtaufnahmen in Johannisthal für den Gründgens-Film *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*," *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 186 (August 10, 1938).

²⁷ Erwin Leiser, *Nazi Cinema*, trans. Gertrud Mander and David Wilson (New York: Collier, 1975), 106. By contrast, Julian Petley argues, "The particular construction of history represented by these [genius] films can more usefully be considered in relation to the conjuncture as a whole, to petty bourgeois ideology in general and to bourgeois historiography in particular, rather than in relation to *conscious* decisions springing from National Socialist film policy." Julian Petley, *Capital and Culture: German Cinema 1933–1945* (London: British Film Institute, 1979), 139.

²⁸ "Das ist eins, Paris und Debureau!" *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, Censor-Card 49884.

²⁹ Hete Nebel, "Die Gräfin und der Komödiant: Zwei Szenen aus *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*," *Filmwelt* 27 (July 1, 1938); H. N. "Die Birne," *Filmwoche* 29 (July 15, 1938); Hans Hufszky, "Im Scheinwerfer: Gustaf Gründgens als Debureau," Beilage zur *Filmwelt* 50 (December 9, 1938); M. Harvester, "Wer war Debureau?" *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 296 (December 17, 1938). See also Rehberg, *Wenn Debureau spielt*, shots 5 and 259.

³⁰ "Wir [machen] andererseits alle Filme aus den Notwendigkeiten und für die Bedürfnisse der Gegenwart. Sie vor allem muß daher den historischen Film verstehen und von ihm angesprochen sein, um sich über ihn freuen oder von ihm erheben und begeistern lassen zu können." Fritz Hippler, *Betrachtungen zum Filmschaffen* (Berlin: Max Hesses, 1943), 53.

³¹ ej, "Debureau spielt Louis Philippe: Nachtaufnahmen zu *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*," *Filmwelt* 35 (August 26, 1938).

³² "Fast scheint es, als habe hier das geheimnisvolle Würfelspiel des Zufalls in Gründgens einen zweiten lebenden Debureau geboren. . . . Debureau und Gründgens – das ist eine phantastische Duplizität von Naturen. . . . es ist, als habe Gründgens es fertiggebracht, diese [hundertjährige] Pause und auch die geographische Trennung zu überbrücken." Hufszky, "Im Scheinwerfer: Gustaf Gründgens als Debureau."

³³ "Man wird füglich von einem geschichtlichen Darsteller nicht verlangen können, daß er der Geschichte gegenübertritt wie der Historiker. Der Historiker hat die Aufgabe, die Geschichte darzustellen, wie sie nach dem ihm zur Verfügung stehenden Quellenmaterial tatsächlich ist. Der Künstler ist nicht ausschließlich auf das Quellenmaterial angewiesen. Er hat das Recht, ich möchte sagen, intuitiv in geschichtliche Vorgänge einzudringen und sie aufgrund einer intuitiven Einsicht zu gestalten. Und es hat sich dann immer erwiesen, daß große Künstler geschichtliche Vorgänge *in einem höheren Sinne* wahrheitsgetreu gesehen und dargestellt haben, als die Historiker." Wilfried von Bredow and Rolf Zurek, eds., *Film und Gesellschaft in Deutschland: Dokumente und Materialien* (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1975), 185–86.

³⁴ "Berauscht euch Freunde, trinkt und lacht/ Und liebt und lebt den schönsten Augenblick,/ Die Nacht, die man in einem Rausch verbracht,/ Bedeutet Seligkeit und Glück." See *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, Censor-Card 49884; *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, *Illustrierter Film Kurier* 2862 (Berlin: Franke & Co, 1938); and *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, *Das Programm von heute* 298 (Berlin: Das Programm von heute: Zeitschrift für Film und Theater, GmbH, 1937).

³⁵ " . . . Das aus gesellschaftlicher Nichtachtung entstandene Gefühl der Zurücksetzung gegenüber den bevorrechteten Schichten. An diesem dann zur Leidenschaft gesteigerten Gefühl entzündet sich die revolutionäre Flamme in den Pariser Volksmassen." Martin Klockmann, "Kampf um gesellschaftliche Rechte: Zum Film *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*," (Typescript: n.p., n.d.), *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, Document file 16695, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

³⁶ Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (1971), 180. "[So] muß ihr Wirken auch immer mehr auf das Gefühl gerichtet sein und nur sehr bedingt auf den sogenannten Verstand." Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (1935), 1:197.

³⁷ "Die Kunst ist nicht anders als Gestalter des Gefühls. Sie kommt von Gefühl und nicht vom Verstand her; der Künstler ist nichts anderes als der Sinngeber dieses Gefühls." Speech by Joseph Goebbels from March 5, 1937, qtd. in Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 447.

³⁸ "Er wäre unter Kollegen gewesen, wo er hingehört!" *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, Censor-Card 49884.

³⁹ "Hörst du, das ist die Musik der Stadt! Die Melodie der Straßen und Plätze! Glockenklänge und Tellernklappen, Flastertrab und Händlergeschrei, Flüstern der Mädchen und die erregten Debatten der Männer. Ein Wogen und Weh'n, ein ewiges Gleiten und Schreiten. Lärm! Lärm! Aber Lärm, der wie ein Lied ist. Eine Hölle? Ein Paradies? . . . Paris! Sei still! Wie eine Geliebte liegt mir die Stadt am Herzen. Ich will sie halten, ich werde ihr mein Dasein weihen. Sie soll glücklich sein, sie soll blühen. Freude soll in ihr sein. Freude und Freiheit! Brausendes und herrliches Leben, von Tag zu Tag, von Jahrzeit zu Jahrzeit, von heute durch die Jahrtausende bis in die Unsterblichkeit! Ein ewiges Paradies: Paris!" *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, Censor-Card 49884.

⁴⁰ Karl Mannheim, *Ideology and Utopia: An Introduction to the Sociology of Knowledge*, trans. Louis Wirth and Edward Shils (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Co., 1936), 193.

⁴¹ "Weil es das Schönste ist, was es für mich auf dieser Welt gibt, dazustehen, wenn der Vorhang aufgeht und zu wissen, alle diese Menschen da unten, warten nur auf Dich und das, was Du ihnen zu sagen hast. Du kennst ihre Sehnsucht und ihre Träume und kannst sie ihnen erfüllen . . . Du kennst ihr Glück und ihre Trauer, Du kannst sie lachen und weinen machen! . . . Abend für Abend kämpfe ich mit ihnen, um Sieger zu sein über ihre Herzen! . . . Sie hinzureißen, reißt mich hin! Sie lassen sich von mir leiten und ich führe sie dahin, wo sie glücklich werden, in das ewige Reich der Kunst!" *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, Censor-Card 49884.

⁴² Hitler considered himself the drummer of the national movement ("Trommler der nationalen Bewegung"). See Hellmuth Auerbach, "Der Trommler," in *Das Dritte Reich: Ein Lesebuch zur deutschen Geschichte 1933–1945* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 1997), 16–18.

⁴³ "Theater gespielt wird hier und da!" *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, Censor-Card 49884.

⁴⁴ Adherents to *Lebensphilosophie* (vitalism) held that sincerity and authentic experience rather than reason should determine politics. See J. P. Stern, *Hitler: The Führer and the People* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1975); and Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984).

⁴⁵ "Im Rahmen einer bunt durcheinander wirbelnden Bühnenrevue trägt Gründgens dieses Spottlied auf die Spießbürger (dessen Verse wieder von Otto Ernst Hesse stammen) vor, das einerseits derb-ordinär wirken muß, mit einem Hauch von Gosse, während es später als mitreissendes Revolutionslied fast wie eine Freiheitshymne klingen soll." Waldemar Lydor, "Gesprochene Tänze: Besuch bei Theo Mackeben" (Typescript: n.p., n.d.), *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, Document file 16695, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

⁴⁶ "Pariser, man fragte mich soeben, wann es soweit wäre? Ich frage Euch: Ist es noch nicht weit genug? Wer von Euch ist ohne Haß, ohne Angst, ohne Furcht! Ihr seid nicht mehr Franzosen, ihr seid nur noch Untertanen! . . . Wo ist Euer Lachen, Eure Fröhlichkeit! Wer ist schuld an Eurem Schicksal? Etwa der König? Nein! Franzosen, Ihr selber tragt die Schuld an Eurem Schicksal! . . . Dem König dürft Ihr keine Vorwürfe machen. Liebt Ihr denn den König so sehr, daß Ihr es nicht wagt, gegen ihn aufzustehen und die Ketten abzustreifen? . . . Jedes Volk hat die Regierung, die es verdient! Wollt Ihr weiter mutlos und gebeugt dahinleben, entscheidet Euch! Auf was wartet Ihr

noch! Unsere Stunde ist gekommen! Das Vaterland ruft Euch jetzt! Franzosen! Es lebe Frankreich!" *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, Censor-Card 49884.

⁴⁷ "Pariser! Ich erkenne Euch nicht mehr? Wo ist der Beifall, mit dem Ihr mich sonst empfangen habt? Warum weint Ihr? Lachen müßt ihr, wenn Debureau kommt! Habt Ihr denn alles vergessen?" *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, Censor-Card 49884.

⁴⁸ Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (1971), 107. "... Vulkanausbrüche menschlicher Leidenschaften und seelischer Empfindungen. Völkerschicksale vermag nur ein Sturm von heißer Leidenschaft zu wenden, Leidenschaft erwecken kann nur, wer sie selbst im Innern trägt." Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (1935), 1: 116.

⁴⁹ "Denn er will ja gar nicht ernst genommen werden, dazu ist das Ganze von vornherein zu verspielt angelegt. Man würde den eleganten überlegenen Ironiker Gründgens mißverstehen, wenn man das unbedenklich mit allerlei Unwahrscheinlichkeiten kokettierende Filmgeschehen als ernsthafte Historie werten wollte. . . . Dieser Film ist reich an originellen Verkleidungsszenen. Ihm geht es nicht so sehr um historisch-politische Tendenzen, sondern er will ein unterhaltsamer Kostümfilm, eine politische Maskerade sein, der einem berühmten Schauspieler große Auftritte sichert." Werner Fiedler, *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung*, Ausgabe Groß-Berlin (December 17, 1938).

⁵⁰ "So gleitet das politische, das ideale Moment ab in die Sphäre des Persönlichen, der Eifersucht und gekränkten Eitelkeit," Ilse Wehner, "Filme des Monats," *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 7 (January 1939): 195.

⁵¹ "Vermeiden Sie den Eindruck eines Kostümfilms beim Publikum zu erwecken!" and "Der Film ist viel mehr als das, was das Publikum von einem Kostümfilm erwartet." *Tanz auf dem Vulkan: Reklame-Ratschläge*, 2 and 25.

⁵² See Günther Schwark, "Tanz auf dem Vulkan," *Film-Kurier* 295 (December 17, 1938); Albert Schneider, "Tanz auf dem Vulkan," *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 296 (December 17, 1938), and various reviews in *Tanz auf dem Vulkan: Presseheft* (Tobis: Berlin, n.d.), *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, Document file 16695, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

⁵³ Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (1971), 473. "[A]ls kleiner Wurm dennoch Glied eines großen Drachens zu sein." Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (1935), 2: 529.

⁵⁴ The Propaganda Ministry made one notable exception and allowed Jews to see a limited number of German films at the Jewish Cultural Union cinema in Berlin. This cinema opened on December 30, 1938, and showed *Tanz auf dem Vulkan* among its first German films to an exclusively Jewish audience. See Drewniak, *Der deutsche Film*, 635–36.

⁵⁵ For an in-depth look at the Night of Broken Glass, see Hermann Graml, *Reichskristallnacht: Antisemitismus und Judenverfolgung im Dritten Reich*, 3d ed. (Munich: dtv, 1998).

⁵⁶ "Nachdem der nationalsozialistische Staat es den Juden bereits seit über 5 Jahren ermöglicht hat, innerhalb besonderer jüdischer Organisationen ein eigenes Kulturleben zu schaffen und zu pflegen, ist es nicht mehr angängig, sie an Darbietungen der deutschen Kultur teilnehmen zu lassen. Den Juden ist daher der Zutritt zu solchen Veranstaltungen, insonderheit zu Theatern, Lichtspielunternehmen, Konzerten, Vorträgen, artistischen Unternehmen (Varietés, Kabaretts, Zirkusveranstaltungen

usw.) Tanzvorführungen und Ausstellungen kultureller Art mit sofortiger Wirkung nicht mehr zu gestatten." *Film-Kurier* 267 (November 14, 1938).

⁵⁷ "Die sowohl zarteste wie stärkste und zugleich gesellschaftlich wichtigste Zuneigung, die es zwischen nicht verwandtschaftlich verbundenen Menschen geben kann, war also nun, wenn sie "Deutschblutige" und Juden verband, zu einem mit Haftstrafen bedrohten Verbrechen erklärt worden. Eine Minderheit, die sich solchermaßen geächtet sieht, wird im Wortsinne und damit natürlich auch in übertragenem Sinne unberührbar." Graml, *Reichskristallnacht*, 156.

⁵⁸ See Walter Hofer, ed., *Der Nationalsozialismus: Dokumente 1933–1945* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1959), 294–95.

⁵⁹ Gustav Raeder's farce *Robert und Bertram* premiered on February 6, 1856 in Dresden and served as the basis for numerous stage adaptations. The Staatsbibliothek Berlin alone has seventeen adaptations of his play published between 1897 and 1938. *Robert und Bertram oder die lustigen Vagabunden*, directed by Max Mack and starring Ernst Lubitsch, premiered on August 12, 1915; see Censor-Card 1337 dated February 17, 1921, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. *Robert und Bertram*, directed by Rudolf Walther Fein, passed the censor on August 28, 1928; see Censor-Card 19914, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. A shortened version of Zerlett's *Robert und Bertram* with a running time of 1 hour and 32 minutes in 1000 meter length passed the censor in Berlin on April 14, 1943; see Censor-Card 58867, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. Hans Deppe directed a completely new version of *Robert und Bertram* in 1961. Deppe made over thirty films during the Third Reich but is best known for his post-war *Heimatfilme* including *Grün ist die Heide* (1951). Deppe's adaptation of *Robert und Bertram* has the vagabonds wandering some 500 kilometers to test shoes as part of a shoe factory's advertising campaign.

⁶⁰ "Ein freies Leben führen wir, ein Leben voller Wonne," Friedrich Schiller, *Die Räuber*, act 5, scene 5.

⁶¹ Linda Schulte-Sasse explores the significance of the names Biedermeier and Ipelmeyer. She notes: "As implied by the homophonic quality in the names '-meier' and '-meyer,' Biedermeier and Ipelmeyer are gentile-Jewish counterparts in their representation of exploitation. Not only is 'meyer' the more common spelling for Jewish names, but 'Ipel' is a South-German variation of *übel*, meaning 'evil.'" See *Entertaining the Third Reich: Illusions of Wholeness in Nazi Cinema* (Durham: Duke UP, 1996), 237.

⁶² "Siehste, Robert, Du bist nun ein verkommenes Genie, und ich bin ein weggelaufener Bourgeois, einer, der lieber ein Strolch sein will, als ein Spießler." *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. In this case, the censor cards include not only the censor's approval but also the entire film dialogue.

⁶³ "Wenn man nur stets Courage hat, was braucht man da viel Geld? Man kommt als Bummmerkandidat ganz lustig durch die Welt." *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁶⁴ By June 26, 1935, all men age 18 and older were obligated to work for six months in the National Labor Service (Reichsarbeitsdienst, RAD). Women were required to fulfill the same service as of January 1939.

⁶⁵ Interior Minister Wilhelm Frick's circular on "the preventative fight against crime by the police," issued on December 14, 1937, is quoted in Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945* (Cambridge: Cam-

bridge UP, 1991), 173. For a detailed analysis of “asocials” in Nazi Germany, see Burleigh, *The Racial State*, 167–82; and Wolfgang Ayaß, “Asoziale” im *Nationalsozialismus* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1995).

⁶⁶ “Als asozial gilt, wer durch gemeinschaftswidriges, wenn auch nicht verbrecherisches, Verhalten zeigt, daß er sich nicht in die Gemeinschaft einfügen will.” Qtd. in Ayaß, “Asoziale,” 147.

⁶⁷ Ayaß, “Asoziale,” 162.

⁶⁸ “. . . Zwei lustige Burschen. Aber das sind keine Vagabunden, müssen Bänkelsänger sein, oder sowas. Verdienen sich ihr Mittagbrot mit Abwaschen. Mit Abwaschen? — ‘ne ganz ehrliche Arbeit.” “Das sind keine Gauner . . . Das sind Bänkelsänger oder sowas.” *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁶⁹ “. . . Wandernde Künstler . . . ja, genauer gesagt, sind wir eigentlich auch mehr kunstvoll Wandernde.” *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁷⁰ “Das Palais muß dem Ipelmeyer ein Vermögen gekostet haben. Es hat sogar mehrere Vermögen gekostet, aber nicht von Herrn Ipelmeyer, sondern von den Leuten, die er hereingelegt hat.” *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁷¹ “Die Sache liegt also so, daß ein großer Gauner, der sich nicht erwischen läßt, Kommerzienrat werden kann, während diese beiden kleinen Gauner, wenn man sie erwischt, für lange Zeit eingesperrt werden, obschon sie ihre Gaunerei nicht zum eigenen Vorteil vollführt haben. . . . Da stimmt doch etwas nicht.” *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁷² “Wer ihnen gerecht werden will, muß sie nur eben mit ihrem Maße messen und nicht mit dem Zollstock gutbürgerlicher Tugenden. Das Normalmaß paßt schließlich eben nur dort, wo es sich um Normalerscheinungen handelt.” “Tauge-nichts und Tu-nicht-gut” (n.p., n.d.), *Robert und Bertram*, Document file 13931, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

⁷³ “[D]ie im Grunde kindsharmlosen ‘Verbrecher’ beklauen nur den, der selber schon geklaut hat, und sie beschenken die Geschädigten. Sie sind also keine gewöhnlichen, sondern ‘höhere’ Diebe, gewissermaßen moralisch sanktionierte Diebe.” Ha. Hu., “Hans H. Zerlett dreht die Geschichte von den zwei Vagabunden, die trotzdem in den Himmel kamen!,” *Filmwelt* 3 (January 20, 1939).

⁷⁴ “Unsere Freude an ihnen ist wohl unbewußt ein Protest gegen die Arbeitsfron des Tages, gegen den Zwang, der unser Dasein allzu lästig regelt.” “Inhalts-Überblick,” *Robert und Bertram: Tobis Presseheft* (Leipzig: Tobis Filmkunst GmbH Pressedienst, n.d.), 3, *Robert und Bertram*, Document file 13931, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

⁷⁵ “Die beiden Gauner Robert und Bertram würden heutzutage leiberfrischender Arbeit zugeführt werden. . . . So manch ein Mensch, der im Gleichschritt täglicher Arbeit müde wird, den das Einerlei seiner Aufgabe zu untergraben droht, der nur noch die Arbeit sieht, der aber nicht mehr darüber hinwegzuschauen vermag, der wird in dem Gauner zu seiner Freude die Unzulänglichkeit alles Menschlichen entdecken. . . . Und plötzlich ist aus der Posse ein erzieherisches Stück geworden. Jedermann lacht über die Streiche, über die urkomischen Verwicklungen, über die Zufälle und Umstände, aber er findet zu seiner Arbeit zurück. . . . So hat ein Gaunerstück auch seine Moral: Das ist keine Freiheit, wo die Arbeit fehlt; oder: Ordnung muß sein, sonst läuft das Unglück

einen geraden Weg.” Dr. B. M., “Gauner in der Posse,” *Robert und Bertram: Tobis Presseheft* (Leipzig: Tobis Filmkunst GmbH Pressedienst, n.d.), 7, *Robert und Bertram*, Document file 13931, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

⁷⁶ When Robert and Bertram lock up Michel in jail the night before he has to join the army, his uncle replies, “Serves you right, now you get to go from one arrest to another” [Das geschieht Dir ganz recht. Jetzt kommst Du von einem Arrest in den anderen]. Michel complains when a soldier cut his hair too short only to learn: “We determine how you look” [Wie Du aussehen wirst, bestimmen wir!]. When Michel hurts himself in training, the corporal informs him: “Ouch doesn’t exist, at least not in the military!” [Autsch gibt es nicht, jedenfalls nicht beim Militär!]. *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁷⁷ “Was die Preussen so alles aus einem Menschen machen, was?” *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁷⁸ *Robert und Bertram* resembles the “village tale” (*Dorfgeschichte*), a popular nineteenth-century narrative genre, which used the village as a synecdoche for the nation. Zerlett’s film portrays the village as the quintessential German home, while Berlin is seen as a café and Jewish. In its juxtaposition of an idyllic countryside to the corrupt city, this film reiterates a crucial topos of nineteenth-century German literature. For a general discussion of the village tale, see Friedrich Sengle, “Wunschbild Land und Schreckbild Stadt: Zu einem zentralen Thema der neuen deutschen Literatur,” *Studium-Generale* 16 (1963): 619–31.

⁷⁹ For an overview of stereotypes regarding the Jewish nose and feet, see Kirstin Breitenfellner, “Der ‘jüdische Fuß’ und die ‘jüdische Nase’: Physiognomik, Medizin-geschichte und Antisemitismus im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert,” in *Wie ein Monster entsteht: Zur Konstruktion des anderen in Rassismus und Antisemitismus*, ed. Kirsten Breitenfellner and Charlotte Kohn-Ley (Bodenheim: Philo, 1998), 103–20; and Sander Gilman, *The Jew’s Body* (New York: Routledge, 1991).

⁸⁰ On seeing Ipelmeyer in the street, Bertram remarks: “Das muß er sein, dem Profil nach zu urteilen.” Mrs. Ipelmeyer recognizes Forchheimer “an de Fieß!” *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁸¹ “Seit drei Jahren sind Sie mein Prokurist, seit zwei Jahren begaunern Sie mich hinten und vorne, seit einem Jahr betrügen Sie mich mit meiner Frau. Also wenn mir jetzt noch das geringste vorkommt, sind Sie entlassen.” *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁸² “Sind Sie meschugge? Was heißt ‘lieben’ mit 600 Taler Jahresgehalt. Meine Tochter wird die Stiefmutter einer Million.” *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁸³ “Schlußgalopp mit der jüdischen Hast, -no?” *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁸⁴ “Er läßt ein Wiener Lied singen und tut in der Einleitung so, als wolle er gegen den donaubesingenden Kitsch einen grimmigen Streich führen. Und dann kommt etwas, was die Majorität im Parkett genau so ergreift wie die Dorfschönen auf der Leinwand. Oder Rudi Godden hebt an zu einer Gesangs-Parodie und nachher weiß man nicht recht, ob man lachen oder ernst nehmen soll. Oder ein Ballett kommt daher gebräust und tanzt mit Ursula Deinert an der Spitze so gut, daß es eine Augenweide ist, und dann endet das Ganze mit einer kitschigen Pose, und man weiß nicht, was die Regie denn nun eigentlich

wollte. Man wird abwarten müssen, ob man das schwierige Problem der Parodien im Film mit solchen Kompromissen lösen kann." Georg Herzberg, "*Robert und Bertram*," Beiblatt zum *Filmkurier* 162 (July 15, 1939).

⁸⁵ "Was wir singen, rührt Euch sehr, Nachher mit 'ergebnem Diener,' Gehen sammelnd wir umher. Jeder spende einen Heller, Keiner weise uns zurück, Erst wenn voll ist unser Teller, Ist vollkommen unser Glück." *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁸⁶ Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (1971), 302–3. "Daher ist das jüdische Volk bei allen scheinbaren intellektuellen Eigenschaften dennoch ohne jede wahre Kultur, besonders aber ohne jede eigene. Denn was der Jude heute an Scheinkultur besitzt, ist das unter seinen Händen meist schon verdorbene Gut der anderen Völker." Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (1935), 1:331.

⁸⁷ "Was hat er gesungen? Nu, er sagt, er hat Zores mit seiner Geliebten." *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁸⁸ The depiction of the Jewish doctor as a dangerous charlatan corresponds to anti-Semitic rhetoric. In *Robert und Bertram* the Jewish doctor Cordaun mistreats his patient Ipelmeyer, giving him sleeping pills instead of medicine, so the doctor can seduce the ballerina without competition.

⁸⁹ "Der Herr Ipelmeyer ist gekommen als Louis quartorze der fünfzehnte. Die Frau Ipelmeyer ist gekommen als Pompadour, aber sie sieht aus, wie 'ne miese alte Markttasche. Das Fräulein Tochter ist gekommen als Königin Kleptomania." *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁹⁰ "Siehste, Robert, so ist das Leben. Ein Gitter ist überall, nur, daß die einen durch das Gitter rausschauen, und die anderen durch das Gitter reinschauen. — Ich möchte lieber rausschauen." "— Na, dann laß Dich doch wieder einsperren. Ach, Du hast eben keine Phantasie." *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁹¹ "Ach, Junge, wir träumen sogar dasselbe. Ja, -hört es, Ihr Götter, durch Zeit und durch Raum, Wir sind eine Seele, ein Herz und ein Traum." *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁹² "Was denn — jetzt schon, bei Lebzeiten? Laß man gut sein, von der irdischen Gerechtigkeit hätten wir sowieso nicht mehr viel zu erwarten gehabt." *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648.

⁹³ See Schulte-Saase, *Entertaining the Third Reich*, 244; and Dorothea Hollstein, "*Jud Süß*" und die Deutschen: Antisemitische Vorurteile im nationalsozialistischen Spielfilm (Frankfurt a. M.: Ullstein, 1971), 52.

⁹⁴ "Das Schlußbild des Films erschien uns nicht als Vergeltungsmaßnahme: In Reih und Glied stehen Robert und Bertram als stramme Soldaten, und Michel kommandiert vor der Front: 'Das Gewehr über! Kompanie marsch!'" *Robert und Bertram: Das Programm von heute* 385 (Berlin: Das Programm von heute, Zeitschrift für Film und Theater GmbH, 1938).

⁹⁵ The following publicity materials and the censor cards do not advertise this alternative ending. Compare *Robert und Bertram: Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 2946 (Berlin: Franke & Co, n.d.); *Robert und Bertram: Lockende Leinwand* 23 (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag, July 31–August 3, [1939]); *Robert und Bertram: Tobis Presseheft*; *Robert und Bertram: Rekla-*

me-Ratschläge (Berlin: Tobis Filmkunst GmbH Werbedienst, n.d.); *Robert und Bertram*, Censor-Card 51648 (June 20, 1939); and Censor-Card 58867 (April 14, 1943).

⁹⁶ Compare Schulte-Saase, *Entertaining the Third Reich*, 244; and Hollstein, "Jud Süß," 52, 321 nn. 71, 72.

⁹⁷ "Ein tiefer, allzutiefer Griff in die Mottenkiste" and "daß dieser Film keineswegs als völlig gelungen bezeichnet werden kann." "Film des Monats," *Der deutsche Film* 4, no. 2 (August 1939): 55.

⁹⁸ "Wird doch erstmalig in einem Film das Judentum zur Zielscheibe eines überlegenen wirkungssicheren Spottes gemacht." Herzberg, "*Robert und Bertram*."

⁹⁹ "So gut das jüdische Milieu dank der hervorragenden darstellerischen Leistungen von Herbert Hübner, Inge v. d. Straaten und Tatjana Sais in seiner Lächerlichkeit gezeichnet ist, so sehr vermißt man einen einzigen sichtbaren Beweis der Gefährlichkeit des typischen Börsenjobbers und so sehr könnte man an die Beziehungen und die Triebkräfte der Vertreter dieses Mileus und der handelnden Rahmenpersonen sehr kritische Fonden anlegen. Aber tun wir es nicht! Nehmen wir den Film als das, was er sein will: ein Volksstück mit Lust, Liebe und Sentimentalität, mit schönen Liedern und lebendigen darstellerischen Leistungen." Albert Schneider, "*Robert und Bertram*." *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 162 (July 15, 1939).

¹⁰⁰ "Das Fest in seinem prunkvollen Schloß, in dem es von Unkultur nur so strotzt, birgt Köstlichkeiten überlegenen Humors auf Seiten unserer beiden Tischler-Brüder, und es malt gleichzeitig das Zeit- und Sittengemälde: auf welche Art der Ost-Galizier schon damals versuchte, in Berlin Heimatrechte zu gewinnen und durch Geld und Spendabilität die Gemüter zu verwirren suchte." Iris, "Das Lokalstück: Die menschliche Komödie" (n.p., n.d.), *Robert und Bertram*, Document file 13931, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. Emphasis added.

¹⁰¹ "Gustav Raeder hat den gesinnungslosen Geschäftemacher Ipelmeyer als Typus für Tausende gezeichnet, und er hat damit unsere eigene — hundert Jahre später erfolgte — gewaltige Abrechnung mit all denen, die Eigennutz über Gemeinutz stellen, vorausgeahnt." "[Die Gemeinschaft befreit] sich daraufhin erst richtig von ihren getarnten Schmarotzen." Mario Heil de Brentani, "Über den Volksfilm *Robert und Bertram*," *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 161 (July 14, 1939). The inclusion of Brentani's article in the Tobis press package suggests that his anti-Semitic diatribe received official approval and was intended for a wide audience. See also *Robert und Bertram: Tobis Presseheft*, 5.

¹⁰² "Wir verlassen wieder das 'israelische' Paradies und freuen uns schon sehr darauf, nochher im fertigen Film miterleben zu können, wie die beiden gewitzten Vagabunden der sich so schlaue und unfehlbar dünkenden Familie Ipelmeyer ein anständiges Schnippchen schlagen." H. J. Hahn, "Auf die Feinheit kommt es an: Kleinigkeit um eine Filmszene," *Filmwoche* 6 (February 8, 1939): 174.

¹⁰³ "Hier herrscht Schadenfreude in der harmlosesten Form und ein Sprichwort sagt ja: Schadenfreude ist die reinste Freude, die jeder gern und unbedenklich genießt. Also hinein in das Erquickungsbad echten Frohsinns, hinein in die große deutsche Filmposse der Tobis *Robert und Bertram*." *Robert und Bertram: Reklame-Ratschläge*, 7.

¹⁰⁴ "Der Zuschauer sollte zu dem Schluß kommen, daß sich in der Gegenwart erfüllt, was in der Vergangenheit angestrebt wurde oder schon erreicht war, wieder verlorenging und neu erkämpft werden mußte. Im übrigen sollte in positiven Beispielen

jeweils das historische Analogon zur Gegenwart gefunden werden." Klaus Kanzog, *"Staatspolitisch besonders wertvoll": Ein Handbuch zu 30 deutschen Spielfilmen der Jahre 1934 bis 1945* (Munich: diskurs film, 1994), 31.

¹⁰⁵ "Das hat der Operetten- mit dem Historienfilm gemein: Beide benutzen die Geschichte als Anlaß für ein Spektakel, um das Publikum mit dem Prunk und der Exotik der Szenen zu beeindrucken; sie bemühen sich, die Atmosphäre einer Epoche auf der Leinwand vorzuzaubern. Aber nimmt sich der Historienfilm vor, ein Stück Geschichte 'treu' zu erzählen (und der Zuschauer erwartet, daß es so sei), geht der Operettenfilm frei damit um. Was er erzählt, muß nicht wahr sein. Er stellt es weder als wahr vor, noch rechnet das Publikum damit. Im Operettenfilm wird die Historie mürbe, nimmt die Form an, die man ihr gibt." Francesco Bono, "Glücklich ist, wer vergißt . . . Operette und Film: Analyse einer Beziehung," in *Musik Spektakel Film: Musiktheater und Tanzkultur im deutschen Film 1922–1937*, ed. Katja Uhlenbrok (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1998), 37–38.

¹⁰⁶ Schulte-Saase, *Entertaining the Third Reich*, 9.

¹⁰⁷ In the prologue to *Wiener Blut* (1942), an alchemist mixes together the perfect recipe for the operetta. Reaching for various bottles labeled "humor," "carelessness," and "heart," he adds the precious essences together in a phial, then pours generous amounts of "music" into the mixture, but before he is finished, he adds a few drops of "history" to spice it up.

¹⁰⁸ *So endet die Liebe* (1934), *Die Hochzeitsreise* (1939), *Das leichte Mädchen* (1941), and *Hochzeit auf Bärenhof* (1942) are also set in the nineteenth century. For a discussion of literary adaptations, see Richard J. Rundell, "Literary Nazis? Adapting Nineteenth-Century German Novellas for the Screen: *Der Schimmelreiter*, *Kleider machen Leute*, and *Immensee*," in *Cultural History through a National Socialist Lens: Essays on the Cinema of the Third Reich*, ed. Robert C. Reimer (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2000), 176–96.

¹⁰⁹ Karsten Witte, "Visual Pleasure Inhibited: Aspects of the German Revue Film," trans. J. D. Steakley and Gabriele Hoover, *New German Critique* 24–25 (Fall/Winter 1981–82): 251.

¹¹⁰ "Nicht alle sind im selben Jetzt da. . . . Sie tragen vielmehr Früheres mit, das mischt sich ein." Ernst Bloch, *Erbschaft dieser Zeit*, vol. 4 of *Werkausgabe* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1992), 104.

¹¹¹ Ernst Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times*, trans. Neville and Stephen Plaice (Berkeley: U of California P, 1991), 57. "[L]aufen auch sehr alte Träume mit unter." Bloch, *Erbschaft*, 63.

¹¹² Bloch, *Heritage of Our Times*, 60. "Nicht die 'Theorie' der Nationalsozialisten, wohl aber ihre Energie ist ernst, der fanatisch-religiöse Einschlag, der nicht nur aus Verzweiflung und Dummheit stammt, die seltsam aufgewühlte Glaubenskraft." Bloch, *Erbschaft*, 65–66.

¹¹³ "Das XIX Jahrhundert ein Zeitraum (ein Zeit-traum)." Walter Benjamin, *Das Passagen-Werk*, vol. 5.1 of *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Rolf Tiedemann, 2d ed. (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1998), 491.

¹¹⁴ "Das gibt's nur einmal, das kommt nie wieder," *Der Kongreß tanzt* (1931), directed by Eric Charell and starring Lilian Harvey and Willy Fritsch.

2: Mapping German Identity: The Foreign Adventure Film

EXOTIC FAR-OFF LANDS, unexplored jungles, vast and timeless wastelands. Images of foreign realms have long captured the human imagination and have been a vital part of Western cinema since its inception. Travelogues and foreign adventure films bring viewers to places they would most likely never visit and allow them to share in the allure of exploration. The adventure film offers viewers the prospect of danger, intrigue, and conquest without ever leaving the safety of the movie theater. Both documentary expedition films and fictional travel adventures follow a similar narrative pattern: a Western European man travels to uncharted territory in Africa, Asia, or South America, where he conquers a wild land and captures its image and natural treasures. The explorer meets natives and distinguishes his own racial and cultural identity from that of a people he considers primitive. Traveling with the adventurer, viewers are given the opportunity to explore blank spaces on the map and experience the thrill of being in a strange new place where the unimaginable seems possible. In the encounter between the European traveler and the native, adventure films visualize popular notions of gender, race, and power surrounding national identity.

In Nazi Germany, the adventure film was a small but significant film genre. Comprising only 11.2 % of the entire film production between 1933 and 1945, the adventure film rarely delivered record-breaking success at the box office, but the German film industry supplied a steady fare of such films and supplemented its own production with Hollywood imports.¹ In 1938 and 1939 the adventure film reached its zenith, constituting 16.2% and 18.5% respectively of the yearly film production.² As the Third Reich expanded its borders, annexed Austria (March 13, 1938) and the Sudetenland (September 29, 1938), marched into Bohemia and Moravia (March 15, 1939), invaded the Memelland (March 23, 1939), and finally attacked Poland launching the Second World War (September 1, 1939), German cinemas featured more adventure films than ever before or after. These stories about explorers, treasure hunters, and colonists embarking on a perilous journey into the unknown belong to a larger discourse at home and abroad central to Nazi ideology and imperial conquest. Three adventure films in particular, *Kautschuk* (Caoutchouc, 1938), *Verklungene Melodie* (Faded Melody, 1938), and *Frauen für Golden Hill* (Wives for Golden Hill, 1938) exemplify the ways that Nazi popular culture

imagined empire building. The questions that inform my study focus on the role cinematic geography played in mapping German national identity. In a society where race determined power, and difference often meant death, how did cinema codify the relationship between the white European and the racial Other? How does the adventurer's travel to foreign realms change him and his relation to *Heimat* (home)? And lastly, to what extent do these stories about treasure hunting and settlement in foreign countries conform to the Nazi quest for *Lebensraum* (living space)?

Imperial Conquest and the Fatal Attraction to the Foreign: *Kautschuk* (1938)

Kautschuk tells the story of how the British broke the Brazilian monopoly on natural rubber (caoutchouc) and contains many hallmarks of German adventure films made in the late 1930s. Filmed largely on location in the Amazon jungle and starring popular actors René Deltgen and Gustav Diessl, *Kautschuk* was marketed as a sensational and historically accurate portrayal of one man's heroic battle to win natural resources for his nation. The participation of several key figures in the making of *Kautschuk*, especially René Deltgen, Eduard von Borsody, and Ernst von Salomon, suggests a complex relation between adventure, military conquest, and imperialism in the popular imagination. These three men came from different backgrounds, but their combined experiences helped to shape "this manly film of determination and energy" into "a solemn hymn of selfless commitment to a lofty goal."³

By the time he starred in *Kautschuk*, René Deltgen had already established a name for himself playing "the vigorous daredevil," a maverick who went after whatever he wanted and teetered on the edge of death. Deltgen made a nearly seamless transition between roles calling for "a convincing spy who knew how to meet heroic death with a smile" in *Port Arthur* (1936, Farkas) and *Achtung, Feind hört mit* (1940, Rabenalt), a fortune hunter in *Kongo Express* (1939, Borsody) and *Brand im Ozean* (1939, Rittau), and a courageous soldier in *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort* (1938, Ritter), *Spähtrupp Halgarten* (1941, Fredersdorf), and *Fronttheater* (1942, Rabenalt).⁴ Deltgen's roles called for a combination of strength, daring, and self-sacrifice, which made him a highly sympathetic and representative hero in the cinema of the Third Reich. Along with a growing popular following, Deltgen enjoyed official support. At the ceremonies surrounding Hitler's fiftieth birthday in 1939, the Führer honored Deltgen with the title of "National Actor" (*Staatsschauspieler*).

Director Eduard von Borsody and co-writer Ernst von Salomon worked on several projects together and became leading figures in the adventure film genre. Both Borsody and Salomon distanced themselves from the Nazi regime but continued to advance in the coordinated film industry of the

1930s and 1940s. Despite their detachment from National Socialist politics, Borsody and Salomon retained from their early military training a staunch patriotism and martial honor code that crystallizes in their adventure films. Both director and screenwriter had first-hand experience of the First World War, serving as officers in the Austrian and Prussian armies respectively. Ernst von Salomon was the far more controversial figure, known for his political autobiography *Die Geächteten* (The Outlaws, 1930), which traced his transformation from a Prussian cadet to a free corps officer involved in the assassination of Foreign Minister Walter Rathenau.⁵ Eduard von Borsody specialized in action-packed adventure films set in foreign venues, but his greatest success was the blockbuster home-front film *Wunschkonzert* (1940).⁶ Borsody's adventure and home-front films share many notable features, including sensational documentary footage, an exciting visual spectacle of male vigor and bravery, and a model hero who fights for the homeland.



Henry Wickham and José in *Kautschuk* (1938).

Film historian Klaus Kreimeier has suggested that Borsody was a conservative whose adventure films were nationalistic without ever becoming politically correct: “The director belonged to those (conservative) descendants of the Danube monarchy who cultivated the genre of patriotic adventure films at the Ufa studios without ascribing the ‘political’ implications. They formed a counterweight to the reactionary art-corporals like Karl Ritter and others.”⁷ While I agree with Kreimeier that Borsody's films do not tout the party line

in the same way Karl Ritter's heavy-handed propaganda films do, I maintain that the conservative, patriotic story line of *Kautschuk* furthers National Socialist military and imperialist goals. This film about a lone wolf acting on behalf of his nation is a parable that preaches an honor code and a behavioral pattern consistent with the leadership principle and Nazi concepts of masculine identity. The fact that Borsody's film voices a pro-British sentiment is neither inconsistent with the regime's love-hate relationship with England in 1938 nor does it diminish the significance of its role models and mythic rendering of conquest. The patriotic adventure film that purports to be pure entertainment offers up exactly the type of excitement that makes the invasion of foreign territory and seizure of natural resources for the fatherland seem like a timeless and natural endeavor.

Kautschuk passed the censor in Berlin on October 31, 1938, and was awarded the distinction marks "artistically valuable" and "politically valuable."⁸ Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels praised the film as "politically and artistically magnificent. A brilliant performance by Ufa."⁹ *Kautschuk* premiered on November 1, 1938, at the Ufa-Palast in Hamburg, a marketing strategy motivated by the contemporary viewpoint that "Hamburg as a world trade center has always been interested in the treatment of colonial problems."¹⁰ A week later *Kautschuk* premiered in Berlin at the Ufa-Palast am Zoo (the city's largest cinema with 2,325 seats), where it played for seventeen days and was heralded as the most successful film to premiere that month.¹¹ Despite *Kautschuk*'s notoriety, surprisingly few film historians have examined Borsody's film as a cultural artifact that could help gauge the popular perception of colonial exploration in 1938 Germany.

The film is set in 1876. Brazil enjoys a worldwide monopoly on caoutchouc, the highest quality rubber, also known as "elastic gold." To safeguard its natural treasure, Brazil has imposed the death penalty on anyone caught exporting rubber seeds. The British Empire is especially hard hit by the monopoly. Without official support yet filled with patriotic zeal, the Englishman Henry Wickham (René Deltgen) sails to Brazil intent on stealing rubber seeds for British colonies in India, Ceylon, and Malacca. On the transatlantic journey, Wickham falls in love with Mary Waverley, the British Consul's daughter, who is all but betrothed to the Brazilian Don Alonzo de Ribeira (Gustav Diessl). Wickham and Don Alonzo battle for Mary's heart and for the precious seeds on Don Alonzo's rubber plantation near the Araguay River. Under the guise of a scientific expedition in search of a rare butterfly found only in the same area as the rubber, Wickham ventures into the Amazon jungle. Accompanied by the outlawed vaquero José, Wickham fights the elements, natives with poison darts, piranha, crocodiles, a giant anaconda, jungle fever, and a massive tidal wave. He succeeds in finding both caoutchouc seeds and the rare butterfly. However, transporting the seeds poses a problem, since the British survey ship Wellington will only take on

the cargo in international waters. The police arrest Wickham and kill José but not before they have smuggled the caoutchouc seeds aboard the *Wellington* en route to England. Since there is no tangible proof that Wickham illegally exported the seeds, Don Alonzo tampers with evidence and accuses him of military espionage. Wickham cannot produce the rare butterfly as evidence of his “lawful” scientific objectives and is sentenced to death. When Mary intercedes, Don Alonzo admits stealing the butterfly and is arrested, while Wickham is set free. The British Empire has won the battle for autarchy.

Henry Wickham is an archetypal hero who possesses all the right characteristics to be either a great pirate or an honorable knight; he is a powerful and resourceful man who undertakes a dangerous journey to foreign realms in order to plunder treasures from the vanquished. The German trade press highlighted his steel-like character, describing him in admirable terms as “in control, restrained, alert, and brave.” Central to Wickham’s identity is “his willingness to sacrifice, his selflessness completely lacking any personal desire for advancement, employing everything for a cause he serves.”¹² He displays not only all the qualities of a good citizen but also those essential to the soldierly male. Wickham’s self-sacrifice for the fatherland was exactly the behavior German audiences were continually encouraged to adopt as part of their own self-image. Although Wickham is English and his actions are intended to benefit the British Empire, he is presented in such a favorable light that German viewers could easily identify with him as a European fighting against a foreign opponent. Wickham is an exceedingly sympathetic character played by a popular film star who specialized in heroes possessing a noble character, a good sense of humor, and a healthy disregard for rules. The British serve as a model for the German Empire in 1938 because as critic Hans Hömberg stated: “The film *Kautschuk* stands between report and fiction. It wants to give an impression of the suspense and elicit understanding for the battle between two countries over a trading monopoly. The story has a motto: responsibility and bravery belong to a man’s adornments (*Schmuck*).”¹³ The lessons garnered from this film corresponded to National Socialist expansion politics and indoctrination of the *Volksgemeinschaft*. In a review of *Kautschuk* published in *Licht-Bild-Bühne*, Adolf Hitler was prominently quoted to illustrate how this feature film displayed the prevalent notions of heroism and civic duty. Boldly outlined in a framed box at the center of the review, the Führer’s words function as the film’s emblem: “Offering one’s own life for the existence of the community is the highest form of sacrifice. Precisely our German language possesses a word that describes marvelously the action in this sense: discharge of duty. This means not satisfying oneself but rather serving the general public.”¹⁴

What separates *Kautschuk* most notably from the chauvinistic wartime propaganda films like *Feinde* (1940, Tourjansky), *Heimkehr* (1941, Ucicky), and *G.P.U.* (1942, Ritter), is that the foreign enemy is portrayed here as a

man of dignity and honor. In Borsody's adventure film, Don Alonzo de Ribeira comes across as a worthy adversary. He is articulate and well mannered, at ease in the drawing rooms of power or socializing at a garden party, and a commanding presence as lord over his slaves. Most importantly, Don Alonzo is a patriot who loves his country enough to safeguard its natural resources whatever the costs. Like Wickham, who defies British international policy to secure his empire's future wealth, Don Alonzo breaks Brazilian law in order to protect his country's national interests. Don Alonzo steals evidence, falsely accuses Wickham of espionage, and perjures himself in a court of law to force the British to return the caoutchouc seeds. Despite his transgressions, Don Alonzo believes that his actions were justified because his country's economic security and sovereign domain were at stake. He wagers everything that Wickham will accept a deal for a stay of execution in return for the caoutchouc seeds, but he underestimates the Englishman's resolve. Don Alonzo loses the bet and pays with his own freedom; he is arrested and accepts his fate with resigned nobility: "The game is over, and I have lost."¹⁵

Much of Don Alonzo's appeal came from the actor who portrayed him. Gustav Diessl was a popular film star typecast as an adventurer hero. Diessl gained his first major success starring opposite Leni Riefenstahl in the mountain films *Die weiße Hölle vom Piz Palü* (1929, Fanck and Pabst) and *S.O.S. Eisberg* (1933, Fanck). Fan magazines promoted Diessl as a real-life patriot and thrill-seeker, who had fought in the Tyrolian mountain brigade in the First World War and was taken prisoner of war before traveling the globe making motion pictures. Diessl's wanderlust had taken him to Egypt, Paris, Hollywood, Africa, India, and Rome, where he made such action-adventure films as *The Big House* (1931, Fejos), *Der Dämon des Himalaya* (1935, Dyhrenfurth), and *Der Tiger von Eschnapur* and *Das indische Grabmal* (1937, Eichberg).¹⁶ The casting of Diessl to play Don Alonzo as the foil to Deltgen's Henry Wickham ensured that the battle between Brazil and Britain would seem like a fair match fought between equals.

The British and Brazilians have much in common in the film. Both countries are empires with a rigid class system and governments based on a strict adherence to the law. The British Lord Chancellor and his Brazilian counterpart, the governor of Pará, insist that their citizens conform to all legal statutes and refuse to condone any violation of the law, even if it will further their national self-interest. The differences between the British and Brazilians are based largely on popular stereotypes. The British are represented as one racial and ethnic group, and white Englishmen like Consul Waverley, Henry Wickham, and Captain Murray are honorable, emotionally restrained, and adept at commerce, while the effeminate, over-civilized Lord Reginald and the absent-minded Professor Hickelberry are stock figures used for comic relief. What separates the Brazilians from the British are their passionate temperament and mix of races and ethnic groups. The European

descendents who make up the Brazilian ruling class (Don Alonzo, the governor of Pará, the military court judge), display the wealth and regal bearing of their position, but their heritage is somewhat clouded. Don Alonzo de Ribeira, for example, is described in the film program notes as “a handsome, elegant *Spaniard*,” instead of the more logical Portuguese.¹⁷ The Brazilian soldiers at Fort Ambé are somewhat unkempt and unruly, and their ranks include men of varied races. The blacks, *cafuzos*, mulattos, and indigenous people (the latter look like a Hollywood version of Indians in a typical Western) are depicted for the most part as wild and untamed.

In contrast to Don Alonzo, José embodies a different version of Brazilian national identity: the *cafuzo*, the offspring of a black and an Indian. José was played by the Brazilian actor José Alcantra and was described in the German press as “a truly unique figure, three-fourths Indian, one-fourth Negro, and brought back last year from the Amazon jungle by the returning film expedition.” The filmmakers took “a mixed breed out of the jungle who acts as Wickham’s servant and functions to a certain extent in individual scenes as the link between the jungle and studio shots.”¹⁸ As if reenacting the Golden Age explorers’ gesture of bringing indigenous people back to Europe to validate their discoveries, the Ufa studios used José to authenticate the reality of *Kautschuk*. The *cafuzo* would serve as a visual and narrative bridge between two worlds, the savage and the civilized. Indeed, José is portrayed as both barbarian and noble savage, murdering his sexual rival in a fit of passion and faithfully serving his chosen white master in the pursuit of a lofty goal. Left to his own resources, José succumbs to primal urges and falls from grace. He kills the black man Raimundo and flees into the jungle, where he falls into a swamp and nearly drowns before being saved by Henry Wickham. José’s plunge into the swamp signifies his descent into the primitive and his redemption by civilized man. Under the benevolent guardianship of the Englishman, José proves he can be gallant and brave. He devotes himself so completely to Wickham’s cause that he sacrifices his own life to smuggle caoutchouc seeds aboard the Wellington. In much the same way as the British survey ship Wellington measures and maps uncharted territory, setting international standards and establishing borders, Wickham’s so-called civilized behavior sets the standard for the “mixed breed out of the jungle.”

The depiction of the black slaves relies on stereotypical notions of Africans as infantile savages who need the civilized white man to dominate and educate them. Black children play naked in muddy waters and a black man lies in a hammock, but when the master comes, the slaves engage in frantic activity. The women bathe the children and clean the porches while the men put on their shoes and comb their hair. The slaves come across as dirty and lazy comic figures: the children scream when bathed and a black man stares amazed at his mirror image when a comb breaks off in his bushy hair. The black maids working for Mary Waverley are equally childlike and ridiculous,

giggling over her fancy new dresses, playing with a parasol, and throwing white dusting power on their black faces. Slavery is presented as a benevolent practice to safeguard primitive people from harming themselves. Don Alonzo de Ribeira owns slaves on the island of Marajá but he assures the Europeans that they are well treated: "You don't need to pity them. At this very moment my poor downtrodden slaves are celebrating a festival and are eagerly getting drunk on sugarcane liquor in honor of St. Anthony."¹⁹

A crosscut between the British garden party and the slave's festival shows the two cultures at different stages in human development. The British are genteel, dressed in their finery and drinking wine from crystal, dancing to a soothing waltz and engaging in polite conversation about science and business. In a series of dissolves, the civilized world of restraint is transformed into the untamed realm of desire; control literally dissolves into excess. In contrast to the British, the slaves are speechless and intoxicated from drinking rum, smoking, dancing to the loud rhythmic Latin beat, and giving themselves over to primal sexual drives. Linking the two cultures is an elementary human conflict: both scenes feature a love triangle and potential violence erupting from jealousy. Henry Wickham dances with Mary Waverley while her admirer Don Alonzo silently recognizes his rival but remains in control. Simultaneously, when the *mulata* Elizza dances with the vaquero José, her boyfriend Raimundo becomes enraged. In a series of voyeuristic close-ups, the camera moves ever closer to Raimundo's angry black face and Elizza's swinging hips, her smile, and then her undulating breasts. Jealousy turns into murder when José plunges a knife into Raimundo and kills him. This scene fulfills the prophetic words of the British Consul and sketches the film's further narrative development: "The Brazilians are nice people as far as it goes, but there are two things they don't like: when you pay too much attention to their women and when you try to penetrate territory where their riches come from."²⁰ The conquest of woman and the acquisition of wild territory are conflated in the cinematic imagination and personalized through the narrative when Wickham steals both Mary and the rubber seeds from his rival Don Alonzo. The equation of woman and land belongs to a broader political discourse that engenders imperialist conquest in order to make it appear natural. As Marianna Torgovnick has pointed out: "[Primitive] landscape is to be entered, conquered; its riches are to be reaped, enjoyed. The phallic semiology accompanies the imperialist topoi, a conjunction based on the assumption that if explorers (like Stanley and Tarzan) are 'manly,' then what they explore must be female."²¹

The Amazon jungle is significant in *Kautschuk* as a manifestation of primitivism, a site of mythic confrontation and transformation as well as a treasure trove to be plundered by the white man. Extraordinary care was given to render the Amazon jungle as true to life as possible. Noted documentary filmmakers Dr. Franz Eichhorn and his brother Edgar Eichhorn, along with Dr. O. A.

Bayer, undertook a Brazilian film expedition in 1936–37 to gather location footage for *Kautschuk*. The filmmakers' arduous journey became the subject of a popular book, and the trade press portrayed it as a heroic undertaking equal to Henry Wickham's historical adventure of 1876.²²

The expedition film was a popular genre in the Weimar Republic and continued to draw audiences during the Third Reich.²³ Ostensibly a documentary film genre recording an authentic journey abroad to gain precious geographic and scientific information, these films have a formulaic structure similar to the fictional adventure film. Expedition films tell the familiar story of an explorer who ventures into unknown regions under great perils to find images never seen before and to bring them home to an eager audience. Explorers were routinely characterized as equal parts daredevil, scientist, and artist. Filmmakers like Hans Schomburgk, Otto Schulz-Kampfhenkel, and Martin Rikli delighted viewers with their footage of African deserts, Asian jungles, South American rain forests, exotic animals, and strange indigenous people.²⁴ They also published first-hand accounts of the expeditions to promote their films and propagate an image of the explorer as a modern-day hero.²⁵ Popular paperback books like *Adventure Tempts: Film Expeditions, Expedition Films* (1940) depict the documentary filmmaker as a lone wolf, often a pilot, who heroically battles countless dangers and often death to take pictures of extraordinary beauty and to record priceless scientific information. The expedition filmmaker exhibits the martial values of strength, determination, and self-sacrifice unto death. And like the conquering hero, he fights on foreign soil to bring home valuable treasures. Using the camera lens as his weapon, the filmmaker captures territory. A passage from *Adventure Tempts* illustrates that in Nazi Germany both critics and the public readily perceived the structural similarity between the goals of battle and expedition filmmaking: "On the pilot's mark, the companion now lifts himself over the fuselage, aims the small, mobile, hand-held camera, which almost looks like a large pistol, at the white flanks and with the lens touches the entire sparkling mountain world. Silently the film rolls away and swallows up the secrets of this world."²⁶ In an article published in *Der deutsche Film* in 1938, Frank Maraun valorized the heroic exploits of expedition filmmakers "as passionate and persistent hunters, rendering with lens and aperture the most exquisite feast for the eyes, snaring on celluloid a prey that often tastes better to us than the diet of feature films prepared in studios."²⁷ As film historian Klaus Kreimeier has recently noted, "in its heyday the documentary film genre, which specifically cast its eye and its cognitive interest on non-European scenery and non-European ethnic groups, was a project, if not to say, a projectile of colonial world acquisition and world conquest."²⁸

Director Eduard von Borsody used extensive location footage from the Eichhorn-Bayer expedition in *Kautschuk*, and he also incorporated aspects of the mythic expedition filmmaker into the character of Wickham. Borsody

capitalized on the public's interest in travelogues to promote *Kautschuk*, so that much of the publicity for this film described the 1936–37 Brazilian documentary expedition. In both the advertising campaign and the way in which Borsody blatantly spliced together documentary footage and studio shots, the borders between history and the present, fiction and documentary, hero and director, seem intentionally blurred. By drawing parallels not only between 1876 and 1937, but also between the historical British adventurer and the present-day German filmmakers, there are numerous points of slippage between the cinematic hero and the cinematographer. Since the historical figure Henry Wickham is obviously embedded into the documentary footage and resembles the contemporary Eichhorn-Bayer team, the filmmakers' accomplishments and perspectives seem to be grafted onto the character.

Franz Eichhorn described the Amazon jungle as a violent and fascinating place where the animals and natives posed an ever-present danger: "The battle for life is fought there step by step. We captured this battle on film: snakes, tiger cats, tarantulas, a praying mantis eating a butterfly, attacking jaguars, and, last but not least, the jungle people: the Jaculos, the Araras, the Ivaros, prowling Indians with poison darts. . . . This world is uncanny — and attractive time and time again due to its very incomprehensibility."²⁹ The European white man is drawn to this wild territory because it is so different from everything he knows at home. In the Amazon, strange animals seem to exist on the same biological plane as savage people, and the distanced observer who captures them on film conquers them by preserving their image. The documentary explorer is enchanted by the uncanny (*unheimlich*) foreign territory and risks falling prey to its lethal seduction. Only his ability to observe from afar and maintain a critical distance safeguards him from the jungle's deadly charms.

Kautschuk incorporates elements of the documentary expedition film and also relies on classical cinema's narrative conventions to establish a particular point of view and regulate the act of looking at bodies deemed inferior and territory inscribed as savage. The camera participates by steering and limiting voyeuristic pleasure of forbidden zones. Whereas the spectacle was an integral part of Nazi cinema and viewers were constantly given the opportunity to look at themselves, the adventure film offered a different type of spectacle, the unique prospect of looking at the Other, at alterity. In *Kautschuk*, the act of looking is thematized as both a sexualized, animalistic, deadly pleasure associated with the black man and also a distanced, scientific, and empowering tool used by the white explorer.

In *Kautschuk*, voyeurism is first steered through the fiction, so that the viewer watches Raimundo watching Elizza dancing with José, an act that ends in death. In this crucial sequence, the act of looking at an exotic body codifies the link between racial difference, sexuality, and death. In a series of close-ups showing Raimundo's dark black face with its distinctly Negroid racial features followed by close-ups of Elizza's fragmented, eroticized female

body with its significantly lighter skin and more racially mixed features, the viewer is aligned with the black man's point of view. Raimundo gazes at the *mulata* with mounting lust and rage, reflected in the progressively tighter close-ups, until he must enter the scene and possess the object of his desire. The punishment for following his untamed sexual and violent drives is death. This sequence illustrates that the transgression of borders is lethal; only by maintaining the crucial line between spectator and spectacle as well as the racial divide between black, white, and Indian, can the violence be stemmed. The threat of miscegenation, the black who desires the *mulata* suggested on the visual and narrative levels, was also emphasized in the publicity materials that described José and Elizza as mixed breeds (*Mischlinge*). The use of this loaded term, which defined racial identity and legal status in Nazi Germany, together with the emotional and visceral experience of the subjective camera work, educated the German audience in 1938 to see the danger in looking at the racial Other.

When Wickham enters the Amazon, the camera captures amazing sights and becomes a participant in the story. The location shots taken by the Eichhorn-Bayer team are so closely woven into the fiction that the viewer associates the distanced, scientific camera perspective with the figure of Wickham. Reaching into the trees and dark recesses of the jungle, the camera finds numerous monkeys, jungle cats, and snakes hidden from the naked eye. It even ventures underwater to show the viewer the mysterious and deadly flesh-eating piranha that Wickham can see but José does not notice. The camera also pans across the water and encompasses hundreds of jacará, prehistoric-looking crocodiles that threaten to engulf all the space and destroy civilized man. The camera frames, limits, and fends off the relentless onslaught of crocodiles with its lens in much the same way as Wickham does with his pistol.

At first Wickham is able to fight off all the powers of nature: "With great courage and determination he penetrates the green hell and defeats all resistance from wild nature, her animals, white and colored men."³⁰ However, Wickham seems to have lingered too long in the jungle, because just as he finds the rare butterfly (*laternaria phosphorea*) he has been desperately seeking and reaches out to capture it, he is attacked by a giant anaconda. In this place of primal urges and antediluvian forms of existence, he falls prey to the ancient symbol of temptation and transformation. Suggesting the dangers of taking too much pleasure in looking at this forbidden zone, the snake twists its body around Wickham's neck and nearly crushes him to death. José rescues him, but immediately after this attack the Englishman suffers from jungle fever.

In a haunting montage of dissolves, Wickham hallucinates that the jungle is alive, taking over his space and appropriating his gaze. The sequence begins with a delirious, supine Wickham staring up at the cafuzo José who suddenly turns into a bizarre paper-maché snake. As the Englishman succumbs to the seductive power of wild territory, he loses control of his dis-

tanced, authoritative gaze and merges visually with the jungle. His face is covered with swirling water and fades into uncanny, ferocious animals staring out of the darkness. The enormous dark eyes of various jungle creatures fill the screen and threaten to engulf the white man and seize his identity. The sequence concludes with a dissolve from a monkey's face to that of a Brazilian soldier, so that the non-European man frames the entire hallucination. An extreme close-up of an unkempt Brazilian soldier laughing grotesquely acts as a segue from the jungle to civilization, as the camera slowly pulls back to reveal Wickham lying in a hammock at Fort Ambé. The camera work reiterates on the visual level that the borders between animal and mixed breed are fluid as shown in dissolves, while the borders between the mixed breed and the white man are sharper as rendered in cuts. The restoration of a distanced point of view coincides with Wickham's ability to restore his identity and authoritative gaze. Aided by a black man who acts as both facilitator and foil, Wickham stares into a mirror and reconfirms his status as *Mensch*, while the black barber Miguel gives him a shave and promises to make him feel like a human being again.

Even after the explorer's objective point of view is re-established, the act of image making continues to motivate the narrative. Wickham is tried for espionage because he cannot produce the *laternaria phosphorea*, and his drawing of this rare butterfly matches the map of Fort Ambé. Wickham argues that the ostensive link between image making and military objectives is mere coincidence. He denies any truth to the metonymic string equating the butterfly with art, geography, and military security, and tries to obscure the deeper affiliation between caoutchouc and scientific, economic, and military power. In the end, an image resolves the narrative conflict and proves Wickham's "lawful" intentions. By producing an intimate portrait of herself and Wickham, Mary proves that Don Alonzo perjured himself and stole the butterfly to harm his rival. Don Alonzo had sworn that he provided the court with all of Wickham's possessions, but since he gave Mary the portrait before the trial, it is clear that he tampered with evidence. Mary's possession of Wickham's domesticated image is seen as convincing proof, and he is exonerated of any wrongdoing.

Kautschuk ends with Wickham's acquittal and England's achievement of autarchy. Through his adventurous spirit and ingenuity, Wickham preserved his nation's dominance, an inevitable exploit according to the British Consul Waverley because "whenever the world needs a raw material, then it finds the means to obtain it."³¹ Wickham's dream of rubber growing "in endless rows, tree next to tree" like soldiers on British colonial soil seems destined to come true, and the empire's consolidation of military power is confirmed in the film's final shot when the Wellington fires its cannons in a triumphant victory salute.³²

Much of the publicity materials for *Kautschuk* asserted that Borsody's film was not really about Henry Wickham; instead it was about "how a country can gain independence from a certain foreign raw material."³³ Despite the historical setting, the press highlighted that the acquisition of natural resources continued to be a pressing issue in 1938. Writing for *Licht-Bild-Bühne*, critic Konrad Himmel summarized the impact of rubber on the global economy:

Today Brazil's share of the world's supply of caoutchouc amounts to only about 16%, while England was able to establish its East Asian caoutchouc plantation industry because of Wickham's feat and in the course of time has seized the monopoly in the area of rubber production. The one thing Brazil has been able to prevent up to the present day is the export of the Uricury palm, which is only found in the jungles of the Amazonas and is extremely valuable for the quality of caoutchouc.³⁴

Rubber was not merely an important economic resource used to make popular consumer products like raincoats and car tires. Along with other natural resources like fuel, rubber played a vital role in war. "A modern nation could not hope to defend itself without rubber. The construction of a military airplane used one-half ton of rubber; a tank needed about one ton and a battleship, 75 tons. Each person in the military required 32 pounds of rubber for footwear, clothing, and equipment. Tires were needed for all kinds of vehicles and aircraft."³⁵ From the start, the National Socialist government considered German self-sufficiency and complete independence from foreign natural resources a significant military goal. Beginning with the New Plan 1934–1935, the regime sought to regulate international trade, foreign currency, and the import of raw materials. The lack of natural rubber during the First World War had led German scientists at I. G. Farben to make pioneering discoveries in the production of synthetic rubber or Buna ("bu" for butadiene and "na" for natrium, the chemical symbol for sodium). The acquisition of synthetic rubber continued to be of utmost importance to German industries in the 1930s when I. G. Farben worked together with Standard Oil of New Jersey to develop Buna from petroleum. Rubber proved to be so important to Germany during the Second World War that the government followed Henry Wickham's historical deed and plundered foreign resources to maintain its position of autarchy. In 1942, I. G. Farben established a plant to produce synthetic rubber with foreign slave labor at the extermination camp Auschwitz III Monowitz.

Kautschuk presented audiences in 1938 an entertaining tale of exploration that contained substantial political lessons for building the future German empire: the need to protect oneself from the fatal attraction to the foreign and the equally pressing need to invade foreign territory to ensure autarchy. While *Kautschuk* may have provided audiences with a fictional

model that helped prepare them for war, the film ironically proved to be a liability when the Second World War actually began. On September 13, 1939, the Ufa board of directors ordered *Kautschuk* withdrawn from commercial release: “Mr. Zimmermann reports about an order by the Reich Film Chamber, whereby all films which portray our enemies in a particularly favorable light will be withdrawn. From our films, the only one affected is *Kautschuk*, which glorifies the historical exploits of an Englishman. In consideration of this, the board of directors decides not to deliver the film *Kaut-schuk* for the time being.”³⁶



Barbara and Thomas in the desert: *Verklungene Melodie*.

At Home Abroad: *Verklungene Melodie* (1938)

Verklungene Melodie is a love story without a happy ending, a tale of missed opportunities and bad timing. Directed by Viktor Tourjansky and starring Brigitte Horney and Willy Birgel, the film traces the adventures, dreams, and disappointments of two people whose lives become intertwined in Algeria, Germany, and the United States. *Verklungene Melodie* passed the censor on February 22, 1938, and premiered three days later at the 1,200-seat Gloria Palast in Berlin, where it enjoyed a fairly successful run of twenty-eight days.³⁷ The film received mixed reviews and its box office performance

ranged from a glowing success to a complete flop. The propaganda ministry's official response was overwhelmingly positive; the film earned the rating of "artistically valuable" and also the propaganda minister's personal praise. Goebbels considered *Verklungene Melodie* "a sheer delight," even though he admitted, "the plot is sometimes extremely confusing and also illogical and not dramatic," adding: "But who demands everything from a film?"³⁸ Unfortunately Tourjansky's film also earned a dubious reputation as the victim of "false laughter." In numerous cities throughout the Reich, *Verklungene Melodie* elicited a completely unexpected audience reaction; viewers inappropriately laughed at serious or even tragic moments "based on the diminished suggestive power of the film image."³⁹ One commentator described false laughter as a serious problem because "an individual reaction which at the outset is without the general resonance of the public," eventually "interrupts and impedes the commonality of the mass psychic experience, the *experiential net*, which spins a web for all viewers."⁴⁰ What was it about this film that could elicit such varied responses?

Verklungene Melodie begins in 1932 at an Algerian airport in the Saharan desert where all commercial flights are canceled due to an impending sandstorm. German businessman Thomas Gront (Willy Birgel) decides to fly his own plane back to Berlin because the New York stock market crisis poses an even greater threat to his existence than the storm. A young German woman, Barbara Lorenz (Brigitte Horney), begs him to take her along because her child is sick and alone in Berlin. He reluctantly agrees, but soon after they take off, the sandstorm forces them to crash land in the desert. Barbara confesses that she lied about having a sick child because she wanted to go to Germany to become an actress. Alone in the desert with only minimal supplies, Barbara and Thomas cling to the hope of being rescued. Meanwhile in Berlin, Thomas's brother Werner (Carl Raddatz) tries to mount a search party but is unsuccessful because an unscrupulous reporter eager for headlines has invented a story that Thomas vanished with a mysterious woman to avoid paying his mounting debts. The officials refuse to search for Thomas if he willingly disappeared, and his girlfriend Olga will not sell her valuable pearls to finance a private search party. Despite the intrigues, Thomas and Barbara are rescued and return to Berlin, where Barbara moves in with the wealthy Gront brothers and attends drama school. Werner tries to win Barbara's affection, but she is hopelessly in love with Thomas, who lives for his work and does not want to settle down. After dancing to the Midnight Waltz, Barbara confesses her true feelings to Thomas, but he does not reciprocate her love and insists they remain just friends. Thomas only recognizes his mistake too late; Barbara has fled into the night, and his search for her the world over is to no avail. Years later he happens to meet her by chance in New York City, where she is living with her husband and young son, Bobby. Now Barbara really does have a sick child, and her husband is out of town, so Thomas helps her care for the little boy. Taking

on the role of the absent father and dancing again to the Midnight Waltz, Thomas falls in love with Barbara, and they make plans to run off together to Germany. However, at the last minute Barbara realizes that she cannot go with Thomas because her husband and child need her. The melody has faded and responsibility wins over passion.

Contemporary critics noted that *Verklungene Melodie* is set in three different countries and even partially shot on location in Africa, but it seems to operate in a never-never land beyond the here and now. Writing for *Licht-Bild-Bühne* Ludwig Eberlein argued that Tourjansky's travel adventure did not examine the foreign in a realistic manner: "Although these scenes were genuinely filmed on location in the Sahara, the director dwells on the cinematically fertile situation only as long as absolutely necessary for the development of the plot and the main characters. The remaining venues — Berlin and New York — never become part of the events. They always remain the backdrop for a tender chamber play carried by Brigitte Horney and Willy Birgel."⁴¹ Indeed, the main characters travel to exotic locales, but the foreign functions more as a mirror to the inner self than as a reflection of the outer world. Following the adage: "The shortest path to the self leads around the world," Barbara's and Thomas's foreign adventures reveal their connections to *Heimat*.⁴² Their travels conform to what Richard Phillips has identified as a typical aspect of the adventure genre: "Unknown, distant spaces of adventure are vehicles for reflecting upon and (re)defining domestic, 'civilized' places. . . . In the liminal geography of adventure, the hero encounters a topsy-turvy reflection of home, in which constructions of home and away are temporarily disrupted, before being reinscribed or reordered, in either case reconstituted."⁴³

The vast Saharan desert becomes a blank canvas on which Barbara paints a picture of German national identity. The plane crash leaves the two travelers completely lost in the endless wasteland, and Thomas laments that his maps are useless because he cannot locate any landmark to orient himself. Barbara uses her internal map of German landscape and culture as a reference point to plot who she is rather than where. As the daughter of German colonists growing up in Maroua, Cameroon, Barbara diligently memorized an old city map of Berlin. She knows all the streets so well she can accurately describe the route from the Friedrichstrasse train station to the Staatstheater on Gendarmenmarkt and the Deutsches Theater in the Schumannstrasse. Although she has never been to Germany, she has internalized its geography and can conjure up her spiritual home from the sand dunes of North Africa. The former German colonist transforms the French colonial empire of Algeria into German soil and a fertile site to nurture Germany's glorious past. She fills the empty landscape with classical German culture when she recites Joan of Arc's final soliloquy from Friedrich Schiller's tragedy *The Maid of Orleans* (*Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, 1801). Kneeling before the roaring campfire, her

eyes lifted toward the stars, Barbara assumes the identity of the legendary French female warrior who fought for her nation and died for her beliefs:

Do you see the rainbow in the sky? Heaven has opened its golden gates. There she stands radiant in the choir of angels. She holds the eternal son at her breast. Laughingly she stretches her arms out to him. She waves to me. Soft clouds lift me. The heavy armor becomes a winged gown. Upward, upward, the earth flies back. Pain is brief, joy is eternal.⁴⁴

Just as Barbara transformed French colonial soil into German territory through memory and dreams of a future empire, she now appropriates French history and redefines it as German by reciting the words of one of Germany's greatest playwrights. The German language overcomes the boundaries of time and space and can place universal heroic values in the immortal realm of eternity. Barbara's ability to appropriate foreign history and soil by asserting her German cultural identity in 1932 suggests that Germany's humiliating loss of colonies after its defeat in the First World War can be rectified in the near future when the national community regains a sense of self.

Thomas does not recognize that Barbara's soliloquy stems from Schiller, and his ignorance of the classical tradition is merely the first indication that he has not yet learned what it means to be German. Moreover, Thomas seems ill trained for the rigors of foreign adventure, in contrast to Barbara, whose African childhood and experience as a colonial settler have prepared her for the strenuous task of survival in the wilderness. Unlike Thomas, she can distinguish between an airplane engine and the mysterious winds that make the desert sound like it is singing, and while he drinks a whole cup of their precious water supply, she merely wets her lips. Wolfgang Struck has noted that in this barren landscape Barbara and Thomas are far from social roles that prescribe gender identity: "The plane crash in the North African desert becomes a plunge into overpowering emotions and above all an alterity that reverses the usual roles. . . . She, the woman with more African experience, strong nerves, and powerful feelings, displays a sovereignty that allows her to become the protector of Gront, who tends toward panic."⁴⁵ The reversal of traditional gender roles, however, must be seen within the context of cultural awareness, because it highlights the supremacy of Barbara's value system. The female warrior associated with the past, born in the Africa of Germany's lost colonial empire and nurtured on the homeland's cultural heritage, is endowed with a self-awareness and national pride lacking in her modern male counterpart. As a pilot, businessman, and world traveler, Thomas may have mastered technology and exterior space, but he has yet to understand the interior realm of national identity. Thomas must still learn to see the value of home, family, and a shared cultural legacy, lessons Barbara knows intuitively.

The foreign as a projection screen for thoughts and memories of home was not limited to the film's narrative. The advertising campaign also highlighted

this process in articles about the making of *Verklungene Melodie*. Several fan magazines published accounts of Tourjansky's film expedition to Algeria for location shooting at the oasis Biskra, but these reports do not present Biskra as a unique city with its own cultural identity. Instead reporters describe the city as a mirror for the European and a place where *German* culture unfolds. According to one observer, wandering around the city of Biskra, the traveler quickly finds the "European quarter with broad streets, grand hotels, cinemas, stores, and administrative buildings, even the opera house where *The Ring of the Nibelung* is performed and neon lights comparable to those of any European metropolis." When the travelers pass the chotts (huge salt lakes), they have a heated conversation about the German adventure writer Karl May (1842–1912), and when they see the Medrasen, King Jugurtha's tomb, it conjures up memories of high school Latin classes in the Germany of their youth.⁴⁶ The North African culture and landscape is so foreign to the Northern European that he finds it difficult to compare it to anything he knows. Cameraman Günther Rittau described his travels through the Sahara as so far from anything he had ever experienced before that; he felt as if he had entered the hereafter: "I was no longer on earth. Everything that I had seen and felt until now was behind me in this world. It was as if the airplane had carried me out of my life without losing my life. . . . Just a few minutes outside Biskra one can escape from this world. One only has to have the eyes for it and understand how to carry the double burden as merely half."⁴⁷

The German *Heimat* Barbara and Thomas return to is strangely interior. Whereas the African location shots helped to create a desert dreamscape, the Babelsberg studio shots leave much of the modern metropolis to the imagination. The Berlin that Barbara and Thomas inhabit consists of luxurious venues like Thomas's villa, Olga's apartment, and the elegant nightclub or nondescript locales like a newspaper office and airport. These interiors have no cultural specificity and could just as easily be in Paris, London, or Hollywood. The city of Berlin was already well known to moviegoers from such cross-section films as *Berlin, die Sinfonie der Großstadt* (1927, Ruttmann) and *Menschen am Sonntag* (1930, Siodmak) and would figure prominently in the feature films *Wunschkonzert* (1940, Borsody), *Großstadtmelodie* (1943, Liebeneiner), and even *Unter den Brücken* (1945, Käutner). Considering all the attention given to the African expedition, the narrative emphasis placed on the German homeland, and the technical possibilities open to a film crew in Berlin, why is the German capital missing from *Verklungene Melodie*? Tourjansky's film only ventures out of the studio once, for less than a minute, to show an aerial shot of Berlin juxtaposed to similar shots of London, a Middle Eastern city, and New York City. In a review for *Der deutsche Film*, Hans Spielhofer lamented that *Verklungene Melodie* simply did not live up to its promise: "The film starts out in grand style and suddenly the viewer is startled to see that we have landed back in a chamber play."⁴⁸ By contrast,

Georg Herzberg argued in *Film-Kurier* that Tourjansky was a talented filmmaker who used documentary footage to achieve both impressive images and powerful metaphors: "The original use of city shots [Berlin, London, a Middle Eastern city, New York City] should be mentioned. Here Tourjansky demonstrates his strong sense for images. The call for Barbara resounds over the sea of buildings in cosmopolitan cities and illustrates the hopelessness of the search."⁴⁹

I suggest the lack of location shots in Berlin has more to do with time than place. *Verklungene Melodie* begins in 1932 and ends six years later, the time sequence being marked by an English language newspaper in Algeria, a German newspaper in Berlin, and a New Year's celebration in New York. What is striking about the time sequence is that it conflates world events in 1932 and implies that they are interrelated. At the airport in Algeria, Thomas reads a newspaper with the conspicuous headlines "Panic on Wall Street, crash of untoward dimensions, industrials slump by 80%" and the German titles "1932 Schwarzer Freitag in New York." The reference to the New York stock market crisis of Friday, July 8, 1932, when the Dow Jones industrial average hit an all time low and stocks had lost 89% of their value since 1929, situates Barbara's and Thomas's first meeting at the height of the Great Depression. The German newspaper reflecting the nearly simultaneous reaction in Berlin to Thomas Gront's disappearance, however, is dated Saturday, November 12, 1932. The United States financial crisis that sent ripples around the world is equated with a period in German history characterized not only by massive unemployment but also by the Nazi party's fluctuating electoral fortune. In 1932 Germany suffered from six million unemployed workers, its industry was at 50% of capacity, and its volume of foreign trade sank to two-thirds of the 1929 level. Adolf Hitler had run for the presidency in popular elections on March 13 and April 10, 1932, and while he lost to Hindenburg, he had won 37% of the popular vote and was gaining widespread acceptance. In July, when the United States stock market bottomed out, the NSDAP enjoyed its greatest gains with 37% of the vote in the new Reichstag elections. However, by November 1932, the NSDAP suffered a major setback with a loss of thirty-four seats in the Reichstag. By placing the stock market crash four months after it occurred and one week after the November 6th election defeat, the loss of popular support for the Nazi party in Germany now coincides with the economic failure in the United States.

The Berlin sequence begins two months before the Nazi seizure of power on January 30, 1933, and is painstakingly dated but nearly devoid of any location shots or photographic references to geography. The attention to time coupled with the notable absence of geographic realism seems to imply that 1932 Berlin was not the time or place that best defined the German homeland. Home, as Anton Kaes has aptly stated, resonates "with emotional connotations almost to the breaking point: Heimat means the site of one's lost childhood, of family, of identity. It also stands for the possibility

of secure human relations, unalienated, precapitalist labor, and the romantic harmony between the country dweller and nature. *Heimat* refers to everything that is not distant and foreign.”⁵⁰ Tourjansky’s film highlights the fact that 1932 Berlin was not the harmonious, familiar, and safe place most contemporary viewers would have called home. The emphasis on interior space underscores the nation’s inner crisis of decadence, and the distant setting allows the film to present clichéd figures from the hated *Systemzeit* without implying that they still define German identity in 1938.⁵¹ The negative types associated with the “decadent” Weimar Republic, especially the vamp, the yellow-press reporter, the dandy, and the dilettante, were not the sort of characters the Nazi regime wanted to associate with *Heimat*. Even the two most sympathetic figures, Thomas and Werner Gront, start out as immature men who are products of an “unheroic” time.

Thomas emerges as a figure with great potential but presently undeveloped, a man of unequal talents who has not yet mastered himself. On the one hand, he is a sophisticated man-about-town and powerful business leader with a commanding presence. On the other hand, he is nervous in the face of danger, succumbs to meaningless sexual relationships, and displays a serious lack of commitment to family. In 1932 Thomas is a restless wanderer bereft of several notable values essential to heroism and, as such, a man who owns a beautiful house but has no spiritual home. Thomas sees himself as a lone wolf, free to roam and battle the world on his own terms, and he tries to convince Barbara that he must remain unattached: “You don’t know me. I live for something completely different. I have to fight. I need change. I can’t stay put anywhere. I have to be free. I am an immense egotist. I’ve never felt the urge to be together with someone for long, and I never will. I want you to be happy, and you’ll never be happy if you commit yourself to me.”⁵²

“National Actor” (*Staatsschauspieler*) Willy Birgel brought to the character of Thomas Gront his own star image as a man of contrasts whose rigid exterior carefully held in check his rousing desires. In a publicity biography published in 1938, Birgel was described as a man endowed with “a disciplined, passionate nature. He is very well groomed and a cavalier in the good sense of the knightly, self-confident and courtly man. . . . He has always been the elegant, smart, courageous, iron-like, obliging, coldly passionate player.”⁵³ It is worth noting that during the Second World War, Birgel’s image was modified to emphasize his service record in the First World War and to align his acting style with a soldierly role model. In 1940, biographers recast Birgel’s earlier image to reflect the wartime needs: “The word cavalier would hit the nail on the head if it were not a bit too superficial and blurred. Something else would have to be added: the atmosphere of a man who is always in control. He loves, suffers, and renounces with attitude. He does not appear with grand gestures and ambivalent words. Birgel’s acting style can almost be called soldierly. . . . He expresses feelings by suppressing them.”⁵⁴

Whereas the character of Thomas Gront is initially too manly and must learn to cherish family values, his brother Werner represents the other extreme, an overly cultured man who must learn to assert himself and show resolve. Unlike Thomas, Werner is well versed in German music and theater and appreciates his rich cultural heritage. However, his knowledge of art and his national pride are marred by dilettantism because he lacks talent and merely dabbles in the arts. His relationships with women are equally unstable and frivolous; he is excessively sentimental and falls in love with every woman he meets. Werner suffers from “a weak artistic nature” and is initially too immature to be seen as a viable suitor for the self-assured Barbara Lorenz.⁵⁵ The publicity campaign for *Verklungene Melodie* drew parallels between the film’s plot and real life by emphasizing that Carl Raddatz, the actor playing Werner Gront, was a young and inexperienced man who in time would follow in Willy Birgel’s footsteps. Reporters were quick to point out that Raddatz not only looked like Birgel, he was also the older actor’s protegee. Birgel had seen Raddatz on the stage and had convinced the studio to give him a screen test. Writing for *Der deutsche Film*, Hans Spielhofer argued that Raddatz could be a leading man in the near future: “if he is strong enough to assert his individuality, and if he is not consigned to the role of socialite, then he can become the best representative of the type we so eagerly seek: the ‘He-man’ who is not a lout.”⁵⁶

In contrast to Thomas and Werner Gront, Barbara Lorenz is a strong, self-assured adventurer. Unlike her irresolute male counterparts, she combines the practical and sentimental nature so often touted as “steely romanticism.” As the daughter of German colonists in Africa, Barbara inherited a pioneering spirit and the courage to battle unknown perils abroad. Her appeal and believability as a character were due in large measure to the actress who played her: Brigitte Horney. A publicity biography published shortly after *Verklungene Melodie*’s premiere characterized Horney as a rare talent whose exterior exuded “strength and health paired with charm and reason.” Moreover, Horney was a natural choice to play the sympathetic adventurer Barbara Lorenz because the actress was herself “inwardly a woman with the constant desire for and the constant determination to embark on a great experience. She gives herself over completely to an adventure, whether she triumphs or perishes.”⁵⁷

This strong female figure differed substantially from the typical traveler featured in Nazi cinema. As Eric Rentschler has noted:

In Nazi fables about travelers, characters come undone in the topographies of alien cultures. Roaming about puts one’s identity and person at risk. Films in the Hitler era, no matter how mobile they might appear, typically bind protagonists to constrained frameworks, to studiously choreographed and restlessly codified scenarios. Individuals who ramble and meander are usually suspicious or tragic figures in Nazi cin-

ema — unless they are explorers out to forge new empires and extend the Reich's domain.⁵⁸

Barbara Lorenz has little in common with a wanderer like Astrée Sternhjelm, played by Zarah Leander in the blockbuster Ufa film *La Habanera* (1937, Sierck). While Astrée is seduced by the foreign and nearly languishes from the exotic and erotic appeal of Puerto Rico, Barbara's adventures abroad are difficult and necessary to fulfill her mission of disseminating German culture, first as an actress and then as the wife of a musician. Although Barbara travels to distant realms, she always retains a strong sense of self and never loses sight of home as the highest value. Barbara shares more with a character like Renate Brinkmann in *Kongo Express* (1939, Borsody), a woman who travels to Africa in order to help her fiancé get back on his feet. Renate fails to save this alcoholic Frenchman from his savage existence, but she does manage to fall in love with a German man and return home with him. She functions as a beacon, bringing the light of civilization to the African jungle and leading her countryman back to where he belongs. According to the *Illustrierter Film-Kurier*, the German man needed the German woman to travel abroad because "he finds *Heimat* in her and with her he will conquer a new life!"⁵⁹ Renate, like Barbara, represents Germany, and it is her fate to lead the restless male wanderer home.

Traveling in *Verklungene Melodie* is much less about the foreign's seductive power than about the male protagonist's search for self and the woman's role as facilitator. The hero's maturation process between 1932 and 1938 coincides with Germany's reemergence as a great imperial power. Barbara's and Thomas's voyage from Algeria to Germany and on to the United States can be read as plotting their nation's trajectory to greatness. Just as the African sequence charts how Germany can overcome its diminished political role by asserting its cultural heritage, the Berlin sequence illustrates that the decadent *Systemzeit* failed to produce self-sacrificing heroes with strong ties to hearth and home. The American sequence likewise maps German identity in 1938 by granting the protagonists their private fantasies, however short-lived, before reminding them of their civic duty. America gives Thomas the opportunity to envision himself in the role of devoted father and husband, and although he fails to find personal happiness, he finally recognizes the value of home. In the New World, the German travelers come to grips with their responsibilities to the larger community; Barbara remains a settler in the United States while Thomas returns alone to the National Socialist fatherland. The United States, like Algeria and Germany, is not a real country but an imaginary site based largely on well-worn myths about America as the land of unlimited possibilities. Coming to the New World, the adventurer embarks on a journey into the unknown and encounters utopian alternatives.

In Tourjansky's film, America holds up a mirror for the German to see what he is not and to discover what he could become.

In the Third Reich, America conjured up a set of images prevalent since its European discovery: the new frontier, a nearly magical place where wishes come true, a vast untouched empire waiting for the taking, and a country unfettered by an entrenched social system or antiquated ways of thinking. New York City, in particular, with its massive skyscrapers and expansive urban landscape, represented the most positive and the most negative aspects of modernity. America had successfully harnessed the machine and mastered industrial production, liberating vast amounts of energy, and manufacturing everything from Coca-Cola to automobiles with seemingly effortless efficiency. As such it stood for progress and innovation, but this haven for engineers and businessmen could just as easily be a living hell for the poor and alienated masses. America also symbolized the worst extremes of capitalism and the industrial age. It was a soulless concrete jungle, a nation without culture and tradition, governed by a materialistic consumer-driven economy and a seductive mass entertainment industry that would devour the German *Kultur* nation if not held at bay.⁶⁰

Nazi Germany's infatuation with and antipathy toward America found vivid expression in its cinema. Luis Trenker's celebrated film *Der verlorene Sohn* (The Prodigal Son, 1934) featured New York City as a beguiling menace, promising fame and fortune but delivering only squalor and humiliation. This cautionary tale about Germany's native son adrift in an urban nightmare and reduced to an anonymous face in the crowd was a powerful narrative that warned against the deadly allure of America and modernity. By contrast, Paul Martin's *Glückskinder* (Lucky Kids, 1936) offered up the conflicting and yet equally compelling scenario of the modern American city as a place where dreams come true. New York City is a fast-paced, exciting metropolis open to all sorts of madcap adventures and ever-changing identities.⁶¹

Tourjansky situates his celluloid America somewhere between these extremes; it is a land where one can experience utopian possibilities but not necessarily a conventional happy ending. The director confirms New York City's legendary status as an immense and potentially overwhelming urban space through stock footage of the harbor, skyscrapers, and crowded streets, but this city does not pose any immediate threat to the German traveler. When Thomas Gront arrives in America, he is not diminished by the vast cityscape; instead he immediately assumes a commanding presence. Tourjansky literally places Thomas above the fray by superimposing his image onto the New York Stock Exchange. Towering over the bustling trading on Wall Street, Thomas nods his approval like a lord surveying his kingdom and dominating all he sees. Entering the city from this privileged point of view, Thomas's encounter with the New World bodes well.

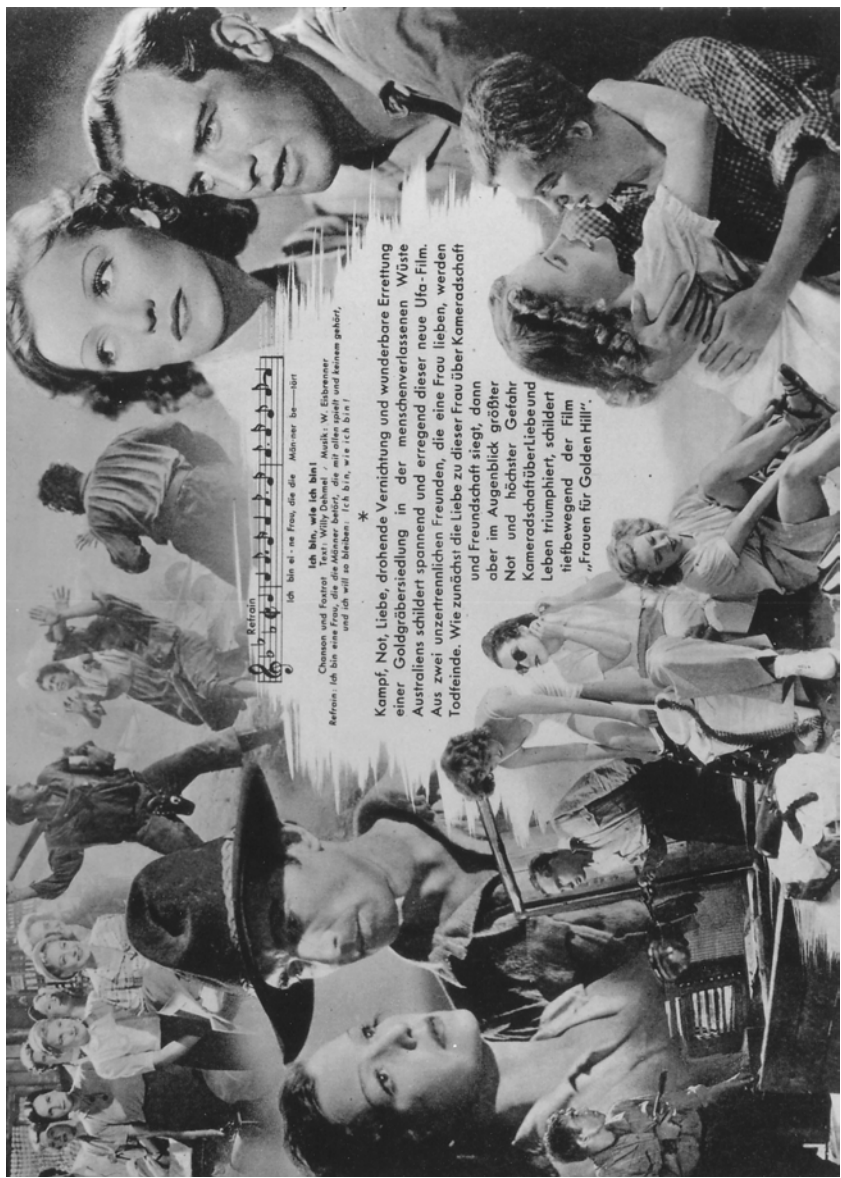
In the midst of Manhattan Thomas finds a piece of *Heimat*, first by meeting Barbara on the street and then by walking into a restaurant where the waiter just happens to come from Köpenick outside Berlin. After reminiscing with the couple about the beautiful German countryside in a distinctly Berlin dialect, the waiter offers Thomas the one thing he desired most of all in Africa, a home-cooked meal of pig's knuckles and beer. Coming home to the lost sounds, smells, and tastes of Germany is made possible in the far-off land of America. By their mere presence and resilient memory, the Germans occupy America and are able to translate foreign territory into native space, just as they did so effectively in Africa. *Heimat* then is a frame of mind without respect for national borders and, as Eric Rentschler has aptly suggested, "a mutable force, both durable and flexible, reaffirming one's place no matter where one goes, no matter when (or with whom one travels)."⁶²

America continues to grant Thomas his wish for home and intimacy via a surrogate family. When Barbara must care for her sick child alone, Thomas assumes the responsibilities of the absent father and is rewarded with the family's affection. He is briefly given the opportunity to enjoy domestic bliss with the woman he can imagine as his wife and the child he has come to view as "our son." Barbara suggests that wish-fulfillment is part of the American way of life and that if Thomas joins in the New Year's celebration he can redefine himself: "People just want to forget, all their troubles, everything difficult. They are crazy. It is one single intoxication, in order to be happy just once."⁶³ Drunk on America, Thomas and Barbara readily embrace the dream of being happily married. America becomes the catalyst for Barbara to live out her enduring romantic fantasy and for Thomas to see his domesticated self as the utopian alternative to a barren and restless existence. However, the dream of freedom and happiness is just that, a dream that can never come true. In the light of day Barbara convinces Thomas that they must forsake personal fulfillment and accept their duty to others.

Verklungene Melodie ends in 1938 with the German man returning to the fatherland and the German woman staying abroad. This scenario of departure and arrival, separation from loved ones, and the reconfiguration of romantic couples played out in numerous motion pictures made in Germany between 1937 and 1939. However, Thomas's and Barbara's parting on the New York docks differs substantially from departure scenes in contemporary movies like *La Habanera* and *Kongo Express*. In these two films, the female characters reject their foreign lovers and return home with a countryman who offers them a more conventional, if less satisfying, romantic relationship. While the couples travel back to Europe, at least one of the lovers is torn by ambivalent feelings, recognizing the necessity of going home while yearning for the foreign and a place that grants them freedom and difference. In *La Habanera* and *Kongo Express* the protagonists purge themselves of the foreign as best they can and are rededicated to the homeland via the most stabilizing social relationship:

marriage to a fellow countryman. *Verklungene Melodie* offers up a different national narrative that suggests that one can serve the community and guarantee its endurance through self-sacrifice and separation. Barbara is already married to a German and duty-bound to her role as a modern pioneer, dedicated to her family and to her husband's mission of disseminating Germany's musical tradition throughout the American cultural wasteland. Thomas returns alone to his native soil still longing for the absent woman who embodies the German spirit. This man, who admitted early on it was in his nature to fight, has finally abandoned his egotism and seems to have grown into the role of a self-sacrificing, disciplined man who can leave his loved ones when duty calls. Renouncing personal happiness for the greater good, he faces an uncertain future in which he may be called upon to sacrifice even more for the homeland. Thomas seems destined for the role of Germany's protector as implied by the final background music, the sentimental nineteenth-century folksong "Muß i denn, muß i denn zum Städtle hinaus," long associated with lovers parting and soldiers going off to war.

Unlike the early *Heim-ins-Reich* movies like *Flüchtlinge* (1933, Uicky) or *Ein Mann will nach Deutschland* (1934, Wegener), in which patriots clearly battle their way home to join in a national rebirth or defend their country from imminent danger, *Verklungene Melodie* grants the German traveler no triumphant return. Thomas leaves alone, resigned to his duty and a loser in the love game, while Barbara pioneers a new life filled with opportunities but devoid of happiness. Instead of romantic closure, the film presents viewers with an emotionally less satisfying morality play. Thomas has finally learned the lessons that Barbara knew all along: to settle down and honor Germany as a spiritual home no matter where one roams. Perhaps German audiences reacted to *Verklungene Melodie* with "false laughter" because the film conformed more to genre expectations of the melodrama than the adventure. The male protagonist seems an unlikely candidate for the soldierly role his heroic departure suggests. Moreover, the female protagonist, first envisioned as a warrior, remains a significantly stronger character than her male counterpart. She remains abroad not as a rambling adventurer but with a clear objective to nurture the people and values associated with home, and thus it is the woman who undergoes a transformation typically reserved for the hero in Nazi cinema. In the late 1930s, German adventure films increasingly featured a male adventurer who gives up his wayward travels to become a settler abroad.



Program for *Frauen für Golden Hill* (1940).

The Quest for *Lebensraum*: *Frauen für Golden Hill* (1938)

Erich Waschneck's *Frauen für Golden Hill* was neither a first-rate production nor a state-sponsored propaganda film, nor even a box-office blockbuster.⁶⁴ What makes this motion picture particularly interesting to scholars today is its commonplace function as a genre film in Nazi Germany's coordinated entertainment industry. *Frauen für Golden Hill* is a typical adventure film that uses well-worn character constellations and plot twists to advance a value system and behavioral patterns in keeping with National Socialist imperialist goals. This story about gold diggers in Australia extols the rewards of conquering foreign soil and promotes a pioneering spirit, population growth, exploitation of foreign resources, acquisition of *Lebensraum*, and the sacrifice of one's life for the survival of the folk. It likewise warns that the pursuit of individual desire endangers the entire community and represents a crime that can only be atoned with death.

The film passed the censor on December 21, 1938, and premiered nine days later in Frankfurt am Main at the Ufa-Theater im Schwan. On January 5, 1939, it premiered in Berlin at the Ufa-Tauentzien (1,025 seats) where it played for a mere twelve days.⁶⁵ Unlike *Kautschuk* and *Verklungene Melodie*, *Frauen für Golden Hill* was not budgeted for an expensive film expedition abroad. It was shot entirely in Germany at the Ufa studios in Babelsberg and on location in the Kurische Nehrung in East Prussia. Despite the lack of foreign location footage, *Frauen für Golden Hill* was promoted as a true-to-life adventure based on screenwriter Hans Bertram's own exploits. Bertram was a renowned pilot who had made several flights around the world and served as an air traffic advisor in China (1927–1933) before becoming a screenwriter and director. His autobiography *Flight into Hell*, detailing the harrowing experience of being stranded in the Australian desert after a plane crash in 1932–1933, was a thrilling bestseller that sold seven million copies.⁶⁶ Bertram's work in the adventure genre laid the foundation for his subsequent war films. Together with Wolf Neumeister, Bertram wrote the screenplay for *Frauen für Golden Hill* and for the fighter pilot adventure films *D III 88* (1939, Maisch) and its sequel *Kampfgeschwader Lützow* (Fighting Squadron Lützow, 1941, Bertram), which follow the lives of two young military pilots from their training days in the National Socialist Luftwaffe to combat in the Polish Campaign.

Frauen für Golden Hill follows the basic outlines of a typical Western. Thirteen gold diggers live in a makeshift village on Paradise River in the Australian outback and dream of one day hitting the mother lode. Tired of their wild and lonely existence, the men get drunk one night and write to Sydney for mail-order brides. All the men enlist except for Doug (Viktor Staal) and Stan (Karl Martell), two former air force officers who decide to go it alone, and

Cocky (pronounced Cookie), who abandoned his wife years ago and secretly signs up his reluctant friends as a joke. Officials in Sydney agree to send the women but insist that they marry the prospectors in absentia to avoid any squabbles. Since Doug and Stan did not sign their own names, Golden Hill's mayor (Otto Gebühr) is granted the right to conduct the wedding ceremony for the two remaining couples. The women arrive in covered wagons and are paired off with their new husbands. To Cocky's surprise, his wife Jenny (Grete Weise) is among the brides, so only one of the two remaining bachelors can lay claim to the beautiful chanteuse Violet (Kirsten Heiberg). Doug and Stan vow to forego marriage for the sake of their friendship, and Violet, a fortune hunter who intended all along to divorce her husband and leave with a treasure in gold, is happy with the situation but must wait until the rainy season to cross the desert. When a landslide forces the entire village to work together and unearth the water source, Violet and Stan pitch in but are quickly overcome by passion and make love on the mountain. Stan not only breaks his word of honor; he also shoots his best friend Doug in a drunken rage. The miners see no other solution but to banish Stan from Paradise River for violating the law of comradeship. Given six weeks worth of provisions, Stan leaves in disgrace with little hope of surviving the trek through the desert alone. Violet nurses Doug back to health, and after she reveals that she is pregnant with Stan's child, Doug promises to stand by her. When a landslide leaves the isolated village without water again, the prospectors and their families seem doomed to die of thirst. Miraculously, Stan, who reached the coast safely, hears that his friends are in danger and risks his life to save them. Flying through a blinding sandstorm, Stan uses his parachute to drop water to the villagers at Golden Hill and then radios their position just before his plane crashes. The miners arrive at the wreckage in time for Doug to forgive Stan and promise he will take care of both Violet and his friend's unborn child. Having redeemed himself through self-sacrifice and knowing he has fathered a child, Stan dies happily in his comrade's arms.

Waschneck's adventure film opens with idyllic images of male camp life that link it to Hans Steinhoff's *Hitlerjunge Quex* (1933), Leni Riefenstahl's *Triumph des Willens* (1935) and later war films, military newsreels, and soldiers' amateur movies where military life is akin to a weekend outing with the boy scouts. Steinhoff's propaganda film and Riefenstahl's infamous "documentary," two widely seen films in Nazi Germany, both depict campground scenes where young male party members happily fend for themselves and demonstrate their self-sufficiency and domestic skills as well as physical strength and male vigor.⁶⁷ The miners in Waschneck's adventure film resemble the party ranks, living in huts, toting water, bathing in a barrel, and cooking canned rations of corned beef. What binds both sets of men, the party ranks and the fictional miners, is camaraderie, cleanliness, and hard physical labor. The miners adhere to the basic tenets of the National Socialist

Männerbund; they form a union of men devoted to each other and a common cause, who are irreversibly shaped by a shared experience of combat. *Das Programm von heute* singled out the former servicemen Doug and Stan as paragons of virtue whose intimate relationship is laced with homoerotic tension: "They are bound to each other for life and death by an old flying comradeship; they also did not want any women."⁶⁸ The trope of two men wed to each other for life because of their military commitment and their subsequent battle over a woman are generic events common to German adventure and war films of the 1930s and 1940s.⁶⁹ These stock figures and dependable story lines conform to classical cinema's narrative conventions, but they also reveal one of the Nazi regime's most persistent fears: homosexuality as a potential threat to the *Männerbund*. The party elite worried that in this tightly bound fellowship where men worshiped power, virility, and a strapping male body, homosexual desire would be a logical, if unwelcome, outcome. While the National Socialists defined homosexuality primarily in terms of decadency, sickness, and pestilence, and rigorously enforced Paragraph 175, punishing male homosexual intercourse with imprisonment in jails and concentration camps, their utmost concern was less with the practice itself than its negative effect on population growth and military dominance. In 1937 the director of the Reich Headquarters for Combating Abortion and Homosexuality stated: "Since experience shows that homosexuals are useless for normal sexual intercourse, homosexuality also has an effect on the next generation and will inevitably lead to a drop in the birth rate. The result of this is a weakening of the folk's general strength, which endangers, not least of all, a folk's military significance."⁷⁰ Healthy Aryan men were expected to reign in any carnal desires that proved to be unproductive because their first duty to the state was to father children for future military service. The motion picture *Frauen für Golden Hill* provides a light-hearted story and appealing background to illustrate the important lesson of how homoerotic pleasure is successfully channeled into procreation. In essence, the *Männerbund* evolves into the *Volksgemeinschaft*.

In the exclusively male environment of the mining camp, the prospectors are starved for female attention and indulge in a form of entertainment that affords voyeuristic pleasure, interracial desire, and homoeroticism. Crossing sexual and racial boundaries, the black barkeeper Josua dons a skirt, swings his hips, and tap dances to the syncopated rhythms of "Little Black Sweetheart" as the white male on-screen audience looks on in delight. Dancing in drag but surrounded by pin-ups, advertisements, and magazine clippings featuring women in provocative poses, the black man is the specular object of desire and visually doubled. The camera cuts from a pin-up of a laughing woman beckoning the viewer closer to a shot of Josua in a similar pose and then to a portrait of the ever-smiling Mona Lisa. These enticing images drive the men wild until the miner Bully shoots at Josua standing in front of the

images and stops the performance in a violent, explosive discharge. The miners quickly subdue Bully and confess that they are ashamed of their decadent lifestyle. Although they enjoy the collective delights of drinking, smoking, and gazing at exotic, erotic images, they see these forbidden pleasures as dangerous and admit that they need women to tame them. As one writer for *Filmmwelt* described the situation at Golden Hill, the prospectors needed women because “the eternal feminine is the natural and necessary linchpin of masculine existence, the incentive and balance.”⁷¹

Josua’s nightly ritual reveals homoerotic tension in the *Männerbund* and also addresses the seductive entertainment of violated boundaries closely associated with Weimar Germany. His performance is reminiscent of the *Negerbälle* of the 1920s, where nightclub patrons would appear in blackface and dance the Charleston to American jazz, and also the gender-bending transvestite balls “that customarily marked Berlin Weimar’s erotic vitalism, its taunting masquerade of tangled and flipped carnal lust.”⁷² African-American entertainers such as the Chocolate Kiddies and Josephine Baker performed to eager crowds in Berlin in the twenties, where they were seen as refreshingly savage creatures whose primitive sexuality, rhythmic music, and free-flowing dance could help to vitalize a petrified European culture.⁷³ Conversely, American blacks were vilified as a dangerously barbaric force that could destroy Europe if allowed to unleash their untamed libidinous drives.

Josephine Baker, in particular, seemed to fulfill disparate fantasies, embodying both savage sexuality and cosmopolitan modernity, a monstrous being without a stable identity, neither male nor female, animal or human. Upon seeing Baker perform *La Danse sauvage* in 1925, one Parisian commentator described her indeterminate nature in terms that border on horror: “Woman or man? Her lips are painted black, her skin is the color of bananas, her cropped hair sticks to her head like caviar, her voice squeaks. She is in constant motion, her body writhing like a snake or more precisely like a dripping saxophone. Music seems to pour from her body. She grimaces, crosses her eyes, puffs out her cheeks, wiggles disjointedly, does a split and finally crawls off the stage stiff-legged, her rump higher than her head, like a young giraffe.”⁷⁴ The reaction to Baker was similar in Berlin, where she first appeared in *La Revue Nègre* at the Nelson Theater in the winter of 1925–1926 and then performed in her notorious banana skirt at the Theater des Westens in 1928. Social critic Theodor Lessing was transfixed by Baker’s ambiguity, declaring “she dances so primitively and genderless, that one doesn’t know if one is watching a girl or a lovely boy.”⁷⁵ White Europeans saw this black woman-man as the necessary actor in a colonial fantasy, where the foreign body rather than wild landscape is the territory to traverse and dominate. Explaining why African-American performers fascinated European audiences so intensely in the roaring twenties, one contemporary reviewer remarked:

Our romanticism is desperate for renewal and escape. But unknown lands are rare. Alas, we can no longer roam over maps of the world with unexplored corners. We have to appease our taste for the unknown by exploring within ourselves the lands we haven't penetrated. We lean on our own unconscious and our dreams. These blacks feed our double taste for exoticism and mystery. . . . We are charmed and upset by them, and most satisfied when they mix something upsetting in with their enchantments.⁷⁶

Unable to explore unknown places, the modern urban adventurer seeks titillation in a troubling entertainment in which the borders between black and white, male and female, are blurred to allow a chimerical journey of self-exploration.

Josua's erotic dance number in *Frauen für Golden Hill* bears the imprint of an upsetting enchantment associated with Josephine Baker, African-American jazz performers, and the excesses of Weimar revue. This black transvestite dancer closely resembles Baker, whose image was widely circulated in German fashion magazines, on postcards, in stage parodies, and even as a doll in the late twenties. Although National Socialists and other conservatives denounced Baker as a depraved and dangerous racial inferior when she appeared in Berlin, Munich, and Vienna in 1928, her image circulated in burlesque form throughout the 1930s. Baker continued to be recognized in the visual culture of the Third Reich, parodied, for example, as a mysterious woman in blackface dressed only in a banana skirt in the 1937 musical revue *Maske in Blau*, which played at Berlin's Metropol Theater.⁷⁷ Despite official condemnation by the party elite, African-American music and dance steps had a profound and lasting effect on the German cultural scene. The propaganda ministry officially banned jazz from German radio in 1935 and mounted a rigorous campaign against "negerjazz" as insidious and pernicious anti-music, culminating in the May 1938 Degenerate Music exhibition in Dusseldorf. By conflating African-Americans with Jews to create a hybrid racial monster of mammoth proportions, advertised through an exaggerated caricature of a saxophone-playing Negro with a Star of David on his lapel, the regime hoped to persuade the German public that jazz was the cultural outgrowth of inferior races. However, despite the official disdain and numerous measures to ban jazz, the public demanded this musical idiom and so the cultural industry consistently made concessions to popular taste. German musicians routinely played milder versions of American dance music or merely changed the names of compositions by African-Americans or Jews. Isolated black performers such as trumpeter Herb Flemming played at Berlin's Sherbini Bar, and nightclubs like the Quartier Latin and the Ciro Bar offered "Negro jazz and dance" to an international clientele until the late 1930s.⁷⁸

Although *Frauen für Golden Hill* is set in Australia, the character of Josua looks and dances like an African-American and is visually aligned with commodified sexual images associated with both Hollywood and Weimar girl

culture.⁷⁹ The cross-dressing black man mirrors the white female pin-up, suggesting a similarity between deviant sexuality and commercially circulated media images of a bygone era and foreign realm. Nazi Germany's uneasy relationship with American (un)culture and its contempt for the lewd musical shows that swept its own theaters by storm just a decade earlier are employed in this motion picture as a critique of sex for sale. Marketing sexual pleasure is maligned as unnatural, but, as one character tells us, selling women for marriage and procreation is not only good business, it is morally right: "Finally the men out there have come up with a sensible idea [to buy wives]. . . . This is the most moral business deal the firm C. P. Barryman has ever made. Thirteen lonely men want to enter into the holy sacrament of matrimony."⁸⁰

As a complement to Josua's dance and a further illustration of the deleterious effects of specularized eroticism, Violet (played by Kirsten Heiberg) appears in a sexually charged musical number. Her performance relies on prevalent notions of the vamp to identify her as a money-hungry spider woman intent on using her sexual power to steal a fortune from her unsuspecting prey. In an interview made during the filming of *Frauen für Golden Hill*, actress Kirsten Heiberg admitted it was delightful to play a real "vamp" and explained her character's simple moral transformation: "a selfish superficial woman turns into an upstanding, good comrade."⁸¹ Imitating both Zarah Leander and Marlene Dietrich, Heiberg struts around stage in a revealing evening gown, a cigarette dangling from her mouth, while singing in the low-pitched voice and presentation style of her predecessors: "I am a woman, who beguiles men, who plays with them all and belongs to none." Her admission, "I have a smile that no one understands, that attracts men like a magnet," links her thematically to Josua's earlier performance in front of the Mona Lisa, but it also echoes Marlene Dietrich's famous line from *Der blaue Engel* (1930, Sternberg): "Men swarm around me like moths to the flame and if they burn up, I'm not to blame."⁸² Equally obvious are the parallels to Zarah Leander in *Zu neuen Ufern* (1937, Sierck), where she starred as the singer Gloria Vane, who is banished to an Australian penal colony and released only when she agrees to marry the upstanding farmer Henry Hoyer.⁸³ Heiberg shared with Leander a Scandinavian heritage, a deep, almost masculine voice, and a similar stage persona as a sexual predator. Their characters undergo a comparable transformation from femme fatale to faithful wife and even end up with the same man, since actor Viktor Staal played both the farmer Henry and the miner Doug. Contemporary film critics argued that Heiberg functioned as a Leander stand-in. Writing for *Film-Kurier*, Günther Schwark acknowledged that "in her chansons [Heiberg] noticeably emulates Zarah Leander's performance style."⁸⁴ Most importantly, both female protagonists are purged of self-centered aspirations and conform to their future husbands' needs. Just as Gloria gives up her romantic dream and literally settles down as a pioneer wife, Violet concludes her song of seduction with a bitter note of things to come, "in this world it is planned that one

quickly forgets his dreams. I imagined life quite differently, but I will take it as it is.”⁸⁵ Pragmatism laced with resignation is a guiding principle in Nazi cinema, played out in numerous story lines that teach characters and viewers alike to mold their dreams to the contours of a harsh reality.

The mail-order brides have an immediate civilizing effect on the miners and shape more than just manners or the household routine. After the women arrive at Golden Hill, the rough and tough fortune hunters no longer dream of finding gold so that they can gamble, drive a Rolls Royce, and buy the favors of dancehall girls in Sydney. In their new roles as husbands and fathers, the miners reformulate their concept of utopia and begin to see that the greatest riches are to be found in family ties. Hard physical labor and a common cause continue to form the glue that binds the community together, and the women are expected to do their share. Rather than performing for men as specularized objects of desire or providing them with erotic pleasures, women’s energy and sexuality must be put to practical purposes, first through work and then by producing children. As Jenny notes, the formula is clear-cut: “In a gold mining camp they need women, simple women, who also know how to work.”⁸⁶ This community places little value on sentimentality. The one overly romantic woman who naïvely gushes, “I imagine it is marvelous to live out there in the boundless solitude with a man for whom you can be everything,” suffers the greatest disappointment.⁸⁷ As if punished for imagining an idyllic love affair, she ends up married to the grandfatherly one-armed mayor who only wanted a mother for his adolescent son. A happy marriage, it seems, is not based on love or romance but on sharing hardships, because as the minister advises: “There are thousands of things that can break up a marriage. But it has been my experience that only one thing binds two people together closely and ardently: you have to have the opportunity to help one another.”⁸⁸

The prospectors and their brides are quickly given the opportunity to join forces when a landslide cuts off their water supply. The entire community goes out to the cliffs beyond the village, men and women marching up the mountain single file with their shovels to battle against nature. Waschneck utilized camera techniques often featured in Nazi era newsreels to conjure up the heroism and beauty of work. The villagers are shot in silhouette against the rolling hills and in extreme long shots as they trek through the barren but majestic landscape. These well-known characters are suddenly decontextualized, anonymous ranks in the distance reduced to their function as workers. When they reach the blocked water source and begin to lift the rocks, the scene is filmed in a rapid series of low angle shots magnifying the workers’ size and strength and in close-ups of their enormous hands and arms with the muscles straining from the exertion. The sequence takes on further significance as a mythic event through the setting, since the rugged mountain terrain represents the ternary origins of life; it is the natural source of water, the sacred site of communal

struggle, and the symbolic location of human desire. Just as water gushes from the rocks to satisfy the villagers' basic needs, Stan makes loves to Violet on the mountain and impregnates her.

Stan's unbridled behavior on the mountain of desire is not a sudden lapse in judgment but reflects his overall temperament and tragic flaw: his inability to control his base instincts. The miners respect Stan as "an upstanding fellow," a former air force captain, like Doug, who served on the front for two years and still upholds his commitment to martial values. Both men wear their service uniforms like a second skin and enjoy the gestures of military life, saluting each other, drinking to comradeship, and believing in the sanctity of a man's word of honor. When Stan swears to Doug that "Violet is a nice fellow but our comradeship is worth more to me" and agrees that "the woman has to be untouchable for us," his friend expects him to stand by his word.⁸⁹ What separates Stan from Doug is his unruly nature; he is a *Triebmensch*, a man who blindly follows his urges. While Doug is flawlessly dressed and squeaky clean, Stan is slightly unkempt, his oily hair falling in his face, constantly lighted a shade or two darker than Doug and wearing shirts that are darker, wrinkled, and never fully tucked in. And although Doug always remains sober and self-constrained, Stan loses self-control easily, drinking and smoking to excess, and quickly resorting to violence.

Stan commits the gravest crime when he breaks his word of honor and shoots his friend in a duel. Golden Hill's elderly mayor, played by actor Otto Gebühr, who starred in countless motion pictures as Germany's legendary leader Frederick the Great, speaks for the entire community and, by extension of his famous screen persona, for the German nation. Standing before the assembled miners, the mayor pronounces the collective verdict: "You have transgressed against our highest law. You raised a weapon against a comrade. We do not have the authority to sit in judgment of you, but we want nothing more to do with you."⁹⁰ As in so many feature films of the Nazi period, the characters in Waschneck's film maintain that there are unwritten laws and a basic honor code known to all members of the community. Adherence to this honor code outweighs any other moral or judicial authority, including the written law of the state. Expelled from Paradise River for breaking the commandment of comradeship, Stan has fallen from Grace and can only redeem himself through martyrdom.

The very definition of community (*Gemeinschaft*) in Nazi Germany was predicated on the notion that all members must be willing to sacrifice any personal desire and even their lives to ensure the survival of the whole. What better forum to preach this creed than in motion pictures personalizing basic beliefs in familiar stories that can easily be recognized as parables without destroying their value as entertainment. In 1940, film critic Felix Henseleit chronicled how important movies were in disseminating the idea that sacrifice is at the foundation of any community. Henseleit noted: "The idea of

community is visible and recognizable in all those films in which a person fulfills his duty to the community by showing himself ready and willing to sacrifice himself totally. We always sense there the law that keeps a folk alive, the law of community, of unconditional comradeship.”⁹¹ In *Frauen für Golden Hill*, self-sacrifice and adherence to the law of comradeship result in two important outcomes: first, the community is saved from certain death, and second, the fallen sinner redeems himself. Stan’s heroic flight to locate his friends at Paradise River, his selfless act of using his only parachute to drop water and thus not being able to jump to safety, means that the villagers will survive and that Stan is a worthy comrade in the end.

Stan’s death is staged with all the clichés of Nazi cinema and its militarized Christian iconography. Surrounded by his comrades in a pieta of the dying savior, his crashed upright plane forming the cross of martyrdom on the mountain where he originally sinned, Stan dies a hero’s death. The martial overtones outweigh the religious symbolism, when Doug looks up to the heavens suddenly filled with a squadron of six planes in formation and salutes his fallen comrade. The film program spelled out the hard but just consequences of Stan’s actions: “Admittedly, [Stan] had to give up his life, but his act of rescuing the entire community wiped out his guilt to his friend.”⁹²

Along with the highly militarized heroes and themes that make this adventure film a typical product of the Third Reich, *Frauen für Golden Hill* relies heavily on the Hollywood Western for plot, character, and setting. American popular culture plays a significantly larger role in Waschneck’s film than the vague Australian setting, but what both New World countries share is the myth of frontier life, a place where a lone man can live free and search for riches beyond his dreams in El Dorado. The gold rush and Western settings exerted an unusual fascination on German audiences in the 1930s, not merely in motion pictures such as *Der Kaiser von Kalifornien* (1936, Trenker), *Sergeant Berry* (1938, Selpin), *Gold in New Frisco* (1939, Verhoeven), and *Wasser für Canitoga* (1939, Selpin), but also on stage in Axel Iver’s popular comedy *Wildwest-Lustspiel* and in various forms of popular entertainment. Berlin’s gigantic pleasure palace “Haus Vaterland,” for example, promised its patrons “a cheap vacation” in its Wild-West Bar, where cowboys in ten-gallon hats served American cocktails in a saloon surrounded by a cactus-lined prairie, cowgirls danced the Shimmy, and blackface minstrels performed American jazz.⁹³ A reviewer for *Filmwelt* noted that the wild-west adventure, “closely tied to danger, predicament, struggle, and ultimately victory, inspires a surprisingly enthusiastic response today. . . . And there are deeper reasons when we talk today about the exciting search for gold as the epitome of adventure, as the classic adventure per se.”⁹⁴ While the reviewer left those deeper reasons unspoken, surely the gold rush’s allure revolves around the notions of conquest, personal freedom, and adherence to a strict honor code. Gold prospecting represents man’s universal struggle

against nature and his ability to extract wealth directly from the earth through physical labor and enterprise. Panning for gold requires men with pioneering spirits and a combination of strength, flexibility, daring, and perseverance. Their rewards are not merely riches but also the personal freedom afforded by wide-open spaces and the promise of a new way of life. The western's philosophy of honor may have appealed to German audiences (and the propaganda ministry) in the late 1930s because it so closely resembled the value system espoused by National Socialism. The lone cowboy is endowed with a simple moral compass of polarized good and evil, believing in adherence to a higher law, gallantry among equals, the need to secure boundaries against a common enemy, and the white man's right to territorial expansion without respect to the interests of native inhabitants. Historian Hans Dieter Schäfer maintains that the Western film genre reflected the Nazi regime's expansionist goals particularly well: "The National Socialists felt their own dreams of being 'armed colonists' conquering new land in the East were substantiated by the Americans' 'daring thirst for action' and their conquest of the Golden West."⁹⁵

The Western, like the *Heimatfilm*, is about conquering and defending land. Because man's relationship to the natural world is more obvious in the Western than in many other genres, it provides an exemplary setting to act out the Nazi concept of *Lebensraum* (living space). In German films of the late 1930s, adventurers increasingly become settlers. While they begin their journey in search of valuable ground for mining, they are typically rewarded with fertile soil for farming. The gold digger settles down to run a sawmill (*Gold in New Frisco*), the prospector becomes a farmer (*Frauen für Golden Hill*), the oil-rigger leaves the sea to manage a hacienda (*Brand im Ozean*). As one commentator for *Filmwelt* concluded, the German adventurer "never gives up hope of one day having earned enough to return home where he came from. Because to a real fellow it is a matter of not losing his home, if destiny should detain him as a pioneer in a foreign country."⁹⁶

In the course of Waschneck's film, the miners learn the value of home and come to realize that their quest for material wealth is meaningless when compared to protecting what really counts: family and friends, self-respect and honor. These fortune hunters first thought only about finding gold and spending their wealth on decadent pleasures. Then they thought about finding wives and settling down to raise children. What they should have thought about was the need to secure their borders and obtain sufficient natural resources for survival. Whereas the first landslide helped the villagers to build a sense of identity as a community, the second landslide destroyed their homes and nearly killed them. In the aftermath of this catastrophe, the villagers demonstrate that they understand the crucial link between blood and soil and that their identity and survival are closely bound to the land they inhabit. In a remarkable scene that makes concrete the concept of *Blut und Boden*, the

men and women of Golden Hill lie down on the ground and use their bodies to spell out the word “water” for the airplane flying overhead. Literally inscribing their needs onto their bodies and their bodies onto the soil, the villagers have found the formula that will ultimately save them. Along with redefining their relationship to land, they learn that they need to protect themselves against exterior threats. Although natural forces devastated the mining village, since the storm came immediately after Stan’s betrayal, it seems to indicate that a weak community without honor and cohesion is doomed to failure. Another significant obstacle facing the group is that they do not have a strong enough leader to take the problem in hand. The one-armed mayor is a respected authority figure but simply too old and too weak to protect the community from its own interior weakness of unbridled passions or prepare it to fight against exterior perils. Men like Bully and Stan are strong but undisciplined, governed by their momentary impulses and unfit to lead. Doug alone seems to have the potential to step forward in the end and take the reigns of power. The important lessons on building a successful community are not lost on the villagers, and their plans for the future are clear: “There is enough water to start out tomorrow on the march to the coast, the march with wife and child to a country where there are fields and meadows, fountains and ponds.”⁹⁷ The men and women of Golden Hill recognize that the true treasure is not gold but home. Having reconstructed their collective utopian dream and armed with the knowledge of how to survive as a community, they seem destined to find, occupy, and defend the living space they need.

The formulaic structure, predictable plot twists, model characters, and obvious ideological lessons found in *Frauen für Golden Hill* failed to win the approval of a mass audience through abundant ticket sales or the full endorsement of the state-coordinated critical community. Some observers like Felix Henseleit praised the film for its gripping realism, arguing that “although adventurous and unusual things happen here, the viewer always has the feeling that he is not standing *outside* the events, that they do not remain foreign to him, yes, that he too could in the end experience them *himself*.”⁹⁸ Others like Ilse Wehner in a scathing review for *Der deutsche Film*, the official journal of the propaganda ministry, argued that making motion pictures with a conspicuous lack of imagination and such obvious ideological intentions was a recipe for disaster:

Mix together: one of the first sound films *Braut Nr. 68* with *Zu neuen Ufern* and what you get is called *Frauen für Golden Hill*. There are numerous improbabilities here. Thirteen pretty girls, elegantly dressed for the most part, are happy to follow the rough, drunken, gold diggers in their primitive existence as wives. That is, not to follow, because they marry them, without ever having seen them! And what a miracle! It works out. Everyone is happy. Add to the mix a woman between two men, a

vamp who is purified in the end and sings like Leander similar chansons in a similar, if not as well-trained, voice. And garnish it all with sandstorms, lack of water, and other catastrophes. And don't forget: loyalty to friends right up to self-sacrifice. By hell or high water it'll have to be a box office hit (at least the producers must have thought so).⁹⁹

Wehner's remarks echo Goebbels's mandate that popular cinema must instruct without making the audience consciously aware of its intentions. When a motion picture relies too heavily on beloved formulas and its political message is too obvious, it fails as entertainment and as propaganda.

The Voyage Home

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, who never traveled past Italy and remained most of his adult life in the city of Weimar, wrote in *The Elective Affinities* that one was occasionally filled with wanderlust and yearned to visit far-off lands. "Sometimes," he observed, "when a curious longing for such adventurous things seizes me, I have envied the traveler who sees such wonders in living connection with other wonders. But he too becomes another person. No one wanders unpunished among the palm trees, and attitudes surely change in a land where elephants and tigers are at home."¹⁰⁰ Goethe's cautionary remarks on the transformative power of travel hold true for the characters in German adventure films of the Nazi era; after embarking on a journey abroad, no one remains the same. To varying degrees, these adventurers change during their travels, discovering within themselves the strength to forsake personal aspirations and devote themselves completely to the greater good. The protagonists in adventure films serve as identification figures to train viewers in behavioral models that promote the value of imperialism.

Explorer Henry Wickham knows from the onset what he wants. His sole aim is to obtain a vital natural resource for his empire, and he is willing to do whatever it takes, even sacrificing his own life and freedom, to ensure that his country retains its position of economic and military dominance. Wickham readily understands that he is part of a larger community and that it is the average citizen's duty to protect his nation's interests. His conversion, therefore, does not encompass his relationship to others; instead it takes the form of a psychic journey to purge him of the dangerous attraction to wild territory. Literally sweating out his feverish desire for adventure, Wickham is restored to the healthy state of selflessness. Thomas Gront, by contrast, starts out as a restless wanderer who travels the globe to satisfy his own need for action but without a deeper sense of purpose. Enchanted by the ever-changing scenery and the sheer exhilaration of motion, Thomas fails to see himself as connected to other people or a special place. It is only with the

help of a deeply patriotic woman that Thomas can finally gain an appreciation of home and willingly sacrifice personal happiness for the welfare of others. In a similar manner, the prospectors at Golden Hill begin as undisciplined men in the wilderness, intent on making a fortune so that they can buy material and sexual gratification. With the arrival of wives and children, the men tame their urges and recognize that they are united in a fellowship of kindred spirits. Survival of the whole is only possible when individuals feel connected and are willing to give up everything, including their lives, to realize a collective dream. The rewards are worth the sacrifices because in the end they share the greatest treasure of all: a secure and lasting home.

In *Kautschuk*, *Verklungene Melodie*, and *Frauen für Golden Hill*, home does not necessarily mean the place of one's birth or childhood, or even land within the shifting borders of the German Reich. Instead, home is a conceptual place where one feels like one belongs, an emotional state where one develops a sense of communal identity and forms a set of values that sustains the collective. Because the adventurer perceives home as a belief that he carries with him wherever he goes, home is de-territorialized, separated from a fixed terrain, and possible everywhere. The age-old idea that home is where the heart is has surprising political implications. The adventurer, who feels he is part of something bigger than himself, something pure and essential that transcends national borders and the physical limitations of space, believes that he has the right, if not the mission, to possess the soil he occupies. As Jamie Owen Daniel has articulated so well, "The call 'Heim ins Reich' was thus not intended to induce ethnic Germans who had been living for generations in Poland or the Soviet Union to come 'home' to Germany proper, but to restore any soil upon which Germans had lived in communities to its 'proper' place *as* Germany. Heimat thus understood and lived, allowed Germans to figure utopia not as 'no place on earth,' but rather as 'any place on earth' where Germans had established communities."¹⁰¹

The Nazi concept of being rooted in the soil (*Bodenständigkeit*) did not necessarily contradict the idea that home can be anywhere. What it meant according to party ideologues was that Germans have a special relationship to the soil they inhabit, an emotional connection that is so strong it becomes physical. The Germans literally are Germany; the people do not merely occupy the landscape, they are one with it. Gustav Ucicky's prized "film of the nation" *Heimkehr* (Homecoming, 1941) about the Polish persecution of Volhynian Germans in 1939 justified Hitler's invasion of Poland as a necessary measure to stop the brutal treatment of German settlers abroad. It also presented one of the most emotionally stirring depictions of blood and soil ideology in Nazi cinema. Huddled together in a dark and dank Polish prison shortly before they are to be massacred, the Germans lose hope of being rescued and fear that their lives have been meaningless. The school teacher Maria Thomas, played by National Actress (*Staatsschauspielerin*) Paula Wessely, who projected a trust-

worthy, capable, and sisterly screen persona, tries to rally their spirits by conjuring up a utopian vision of Germany and promising them a homecoming, if not in life, than certainly in death:

Just think people, how it will be, just think, when all around us there will be nothing but Germans — and not, when you enter a store that someone is speaking Yiddish or Polish, but only German. And not just the whole village will be German, but everyone all around and far and wide will be German. And we, we will be in the middle, inside, in the heart of Germany. Just think, people, how that will be. And why shouldn't it be so? We will once again live on the good old warm earth of Germany. Back home and at home. And at night in our beds, when we wake up from sleep, suddenly in our hearts we will know with a sweet shock we are sleeping right in the middle of Germany, back home and at home, and all around is the comforting night, and all around a million German hearts beat as one and softly pound: Man, you are home, home, back home with your own. Then we will feel quite wondrous at heart, that the crumb of the field and the piece of clay and the fieldstone and the tall grass and the swaying stalk, the hazelnut branch and the trees, will all be German, just like us, belonging to us, because they have grown from millions of German hearts that have gone into the earth and become German earth. Then we will not only live a German life, we will die a German death. And even dead we remain German and a whole piece of Germany, a crumb of the field for our grandchildren's seeds, and out of our hearts the vine grows upward in the sun — in the sun, people, that does not hurt and scorch without at the same time granting its sweetness, and all around the birds sing, and everything is German, all the children, like our song. Don't you want to sing our song, especially now? [A chorus strikes up the sentimental folksong, "I want to go home again."] ¹⁰²

While Maria recites her bittersweet bedtime story, the screen fills with close-ups of the melancholy but starry-eyed Germans who share her vision of home as a place of absolute homogeneity and social cohesion. Gathered together in the dark cavity of their underground prison and collectively dreaming about being buried on native soil, the Germans imagine that they can transcend the borders between birth and death, soil and folk, past and future to become one. The price for eternal sameness and security in Germania's womb is death.

The homecoming is an inevitable conclusion to travel, and an archetypal event celebrated in the Western literary tradition since Odysseus found his way home to Penelope. The German adventure film of the late 1930s also leads the protagonist home so that his travels are momentary excursions into the unknown. Framed by the familiar, the experience abroad takes on significance as an exciting exploit, but it is marked off from normal everyday life and self-contained. Viewers too are brought home, returned to their own

reality after a few hours on a cinematic voyage. But as Goethe suggested, travel to foreign realms leaves an indelible print on the mind, so if it affects the protagonists it should also influence the viewers. Although adventure films conclude with narrative closure and a return to the familiar, they focus the vast majority of the time on an encounter with difference. How did these movies function in a society where ethnic uniformity was considered sacred, sameness was espoused as the highest social virtue, and marking difference was a national preoccupation?

Kautschuk, *Verklungene Melodie*, and *Frauen für Golden Hill* granted German audiences in 1938 and 1939 an unusual opportunity to experience freedom of movement and the thrill of encountering people and places normally considered inferior or off-limits. For the length of the movie, one could dwell in and on the foreign without fear of reprisal. *Verklungene Melodie* visits exciting and exotic locales, but with its sad story of Germans leaving loved ones in 1938, it also resonates at this historical juncture with the pain of exile. In a nation where family, friends, and neighbors were increasingly faced with the prospect of permanent separation, Schiller's sentiment "pain is brief, joy is eternal" could offer solace or cynical reflection. *Kautschuk* and *Frauen für Golden Hill*, on the other hand, present the exploration of foreign territory and foreign bodies as a highly seductive but generally lethal undertaking. In scenes of stunning visual beauty and psychological insight, these films illustrate for viewers the myriad of pleasures inherent in watching a spectacle of difference, yet in each instance the act of looking at foreign bodies and space is inscribed with violence or death. Did actual moviegoers embrace the pleasure in looking at the Other without taking the moral imperative too close to heart, or did they continuously divert their attention from such pleasures due to the inherent threat of retribution, or did the prospect of violent seduction heighten titillation? Did the propaganda ministry create such films exactly because they provided a relatively safe outlet for pent-up emotions and the need for non-conformity? These questions cannot be answered with certainty, but it is clear that adventure films in the Third Reich did contain potential channels for resistance. The strong social taboos against homoerotic, interracial, and xenophilic desire, while not entirely lifted, are momentarily suspended, so that one could safely indulge in forbidden pleasures. The adventure film requires the observer to locate difference; one must constantly compare the known to the unknown, home to abroad, the forest to the jungle, familiar animals to strange ones, Germans to natives. It is in this tension, stories preaching homogeneity yet filled with the spectacle of difference, that the adventure film uniquely addressed its audience's needs.

Notes

¹ Hollywood Westerns and action adventures starring Wallace Beery, Clark Gable, and Gary Cooper were especially popular in Nazi Germany. For an overview of American films in the Third Reich, see Markus Spieker, *Hollywood unterm Hakenkreuz: Der amerikanische Spielfilm im Dritten Reich* (Trier: Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1999).

² Gerd Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik: Eine soziologische Untersuchung über die Spielfilme des Dritten Reiches* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1969), 110. *Der deutsche Film*, the official organ of the propaganda ministry, cited the adventure-criminal film as the third most popular genre in 1939, behind the contemporary drama (*Gegenwartsfilm*) and the serious drama (*Dialogfilm*). These conclusions were based on a survey reflecting a small sampling of primarily male (65%) moviegoers. See Frank Maraun, "Das Ergebnis: Wirklichkeitsnähe bevorzugt: Eine Untersuchung über den 'Publikumsgeschmack,'" *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 11 (May 1939): 310; and Egon Gürtler, "Weshalb gehen Sie in einen Film?" *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 11 (May 1939): 316.

³ Reviewer Paul Otto referred to *Kautschuk* as "diese[r] männliche[] Film der Entschlossenheit und Energie," "Ein Monopol wird gebrochen: *Kautschuk* im Ufa-Palast am Zoo" (n.p., n.d.), *Kautschuk*, Document File 8701, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. *Kautschuk* was also called "ein starker, männlicher Stoff, ein hohes Lied selbstloser Einsatzbereitschaft für ein hohes Ziel," "Filme des Monats," *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 6 (December 1938): 163.

⁴ René Deltgen (1909–1979) was described as "der kraftstrotzende Draufgänger" in *Urlaub auf Ehrenwort* and "ein überlegener Spion, der noch im heroischen Tod zu lächeln verstand" in *Port Arthur*. H. W., "Im Scheinwerfer: René Deltgen," Beilage zur *Filmwelt* 55 (n.d.), *Kautschuk*, Document File 8701, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. By contrast, in a biographical piece published shortly before the premiere of *Kautschuk*, Deltgen was portrayed as a happily married man and young father who bears little resemblance to his on-screen persona. The one personality trait the star shared with his adventurer roles was a mischievous nature, see "René Deltgen: Weg von der Landarbeit zur Bühne und zum Film," *Filmwelt* 43 (October 21, 1938). After the Second World War, Deltgen continued to play bold adventurers, starring for example as the evil Prince Ramigani in *Der Tiger von Eschnapur* and *Das indische Grabmal* (1959, Lang).

⁵ Ernst von Salomon (1902–1972) was sentenced in 1922 to five years imprisonment for his involvement in the Rathenau assassination. Today's readers may be more familiar with Salomon's post-war publication *Der Fragebogen* (The Questionnaire, 1951), in which he publicly answered the 131 questions posed by the Allied Forces in the denazification process. *Der Fragebogen* caused a lively debate and was a best seller in the Federal Republic of Germany. Salomon also wrote the screenplays for *Sensationsprozeß Cassila* (1939), *Kongo-Express* (1939), *Carl Peters* (1941), and *Liane: Mädchen aus dem Urwald* (1956).

⁶ Eduard von Borsody (1898–1970) attended a military academy before serving in the First World War as a lieutenant in a heavy artillery unit. In 1916 he was wounded in action and decorated. Borsody began his career as a cameraman in 1919 and

worked on such notable films as *Polizeibericht Überfall* (1929, cameraman for Ernö Metzner) and *Flüchtlinge* (1933, editor for Gustav Ucicky), starring Hans Albers as a German persecuted abroad who returns triumphantly to the fatherland. Borsody directed the adventure films *Brillanten* (1937), *Kongo-Express* (1939), and *Sensationsprozess Casilla* (1939) and also the home-front film *Wunschkonzert* (1940). After the Second World War, Borsody continued to make adventure films including *Sensation im Savoy* (1950) and the cult-classic *Liane: Mädchen aus dem Urwald* (1956). For a contemporaneous assessment of Borsody, see Hans-Ottmar Fiedler, "Tempo, Spannung, Atmosphäre: Der Spielleiter Eduard v. Borsody und seine Filme," *Filmwelt* 34 (August 23, 1940).

⁷ "Mit Karl Hartl gehörte der Regisseur zu jenen (konservativen) Abkömmlingen der Donaumonarchie, die bei der Ufa das Genre des patriotischen Abenteuerfilms pflegten, ohne den 'staatspolitischen' Implikationen beizumessen. Sie bildeten ein Gegengewicht zu den reaktionären Kunst-Korporalen vom Schlage Karl Ritters und anderer." Klaus Kreimeier, *Die Ufa-Story: Geschichte eines Filmkonzerns* (Munich: Hanser, 1992), 332.

⁸ *Kautschuk*, Censor-Card 49615, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. The censor cards provide a narrative description of the action but not the dialogues. All dialogues are taken from the videocassette copy of *Kautschuk* available in commercial release.

⁹ "1. November 1938: Filme geprüft: "Kautschuk," Regie Borsody, mit Deltgen, v. Langen, Hübner und Dießl. Großartig politisch und künstlerisch. Eine Glanzleistung der Ufa." Joseph Goebbels, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, ed. Elke Fröhlich, Part I: Aufzeichnungen 1924–1942, 9 vols. (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1998), I. 6: 169.

¹⁰ "Hamburg ist als Welthandelsplatz schon immer an der Behandlung kolonialer Probleme interessiert gewesen." Elisabeth Holz, "Festliche Hamburger Uraufführung von *Kautschuk*," *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 258 (November 2, 1938).

¹¹ "Berlins November Uraufführungen," *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 287 (December 7, 1938). *Kautschuk* cost 802,000 RM to make and brought in an estimated 1.8 million RM in box office receipts, see Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 415 and 428.

¹² Henry Wickham is described as "beherrscht, verhalten, geistesgegenwärtig und tapfer." Hans Erasmus Fischer, "Filme, die wir sahen: *Kautschuk*," *Filmwelt* 48 (November 25, 1938). Wickham is characterized "von seinem Opfermut, von seiner Selbstlosigkeit, die persönlichen Eigennutz vollkommen ausschließt und alles für die Sache einsetzt, der er dient." Felix Henseleit, "*Kautschuk*," *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 264 (November 9, 1938).

¹³ "Der Film *Kautschuk* steht zwischen Reportage und Fabel; er will einen spannungsvermittelnden und einen verständniserweckenden Eindruck vom Kampf zweier Länder um ein Handelsmonopol erwecken. . . . Die Fabel, die sich um die Urwaldszenen rankt, steht unter dem Motto: Verantwortung und Tapferkeit gehören zum Schmuck des Mannes." Hans Hömberg, "*Kautschuk* Premiere im Ufa-Palast am Zoo" (n.p., n.d.), *Kautschuk*, Document File 8701, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

¹⁴ "In der Hingabe des eigenen Lebens für die Existenz der Gemeinschaft liegt die Krönung allen Opfersinns. Gerade unsere deutsche Sprache besitzt ein Wort, das in herrlicher Weise das Handeln nach diesem Sinn bezeichnet: Pflichterfüllung. Das

heißt: Nicht sich selbst genügen, sondern der Allgemeinheit dienen." Adolf Hitler, qtd. in Konrad Himmel, "Eine Tat, die die Weltwirtschaft umformte," *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 207 (September 3, 1938).

¹⁵ "Das Spiel ist aus und ich habe verloren." *Kautschuk* film dialogue.

¹⁶ For a contemporaneous description of Gustav Diessl (1899–1948), see "Im Scheinwerfer: Das Künstlerehepaar Gustav Diessl-Maria Cebotari," Beilage zur *Filmwelt* 44 (Oktober 28, 1938).

¹⁷ "Don Alonzo [ist] ein[] schöne[r], elegante[r] *Spanier*." *Kautschuk, Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 2879 (Berlin: Vereinigte Verlagsgesellschaften Franke & Co., n.d.). Emphasis added.

¹⁸ "[José ist] eine wirklich einzigartige Figur . . . zu drei Vierteln Indianer, zu einem Viertel Neger und von der aus den Urwäldern von Amazonas im vorigen Jahre zurückgekehrten Filmexpedition mitgebracht wurde. . . . Dadurch soll der lebenswahre Charakter, der dem Film eigen ist, ausgiebigst betont werden." Konrad Himmel, "Eine Tat, die die Weltwirtschaft umformte," *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 207 (September 3, 1938). "[Man brachte] aus dem Urwald einen Mischling mit, der darstellerisch als der Diener Wickhams auftritt und in den einzelnen Szenen gewissermaßen das Bindeglied zwischen Urwald- und den Atelieraufnahmen ist." "Abenteuerlicher Kampf um das 'elastische Gold': Zu dem Film *Kautschuk*," *Filmwelt* 45 (November 4, 1938).

¹⁹ "Aber Sie brauchen sie nicht zu bedauern. Im Augenblick feiern meine armen getretenen Sklaven gerade ein Fest und sind eifrig dabei, sich zu Ehren des heiligen Antonios mit Zuckerrohrschapps zu betrinken." *Kautschuk* film dialogue.

²⁰ "Die Brasilianer sind so weit ganz nette Leute, aber zwei Dinge sehen sie nicht gern: wenn man sich zuviel um ihre Frauen kümmert, und wenn man in Gebiete einzudringen versucht, aus dem ihr Reichtum stammt." *Kautschuk* film dialogue.

²¹ Marianna Torgovnick, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1990), 61.

²² The brothers Eichhorn had previously traveled to Brazil from 1930 to 1931 where they worked on the cultural documentary *Urwald Symphonie: Die grüne Hölle* (Brückner/Bauer-Adamara). In 1937 Franz Eichhorn published a vivid account of his Brazilian adventures, *In the Green Hell: Winding Journeys Through Brazil*, see Franz E. Anders [pseudonym for Franz Eichhorn], *In der grünen Hölle: Kurbelfahrten durch Brasilien* (Berlin: Scherl Verlag, 1937). This book continued to be popular after the war, being translated into French and reprinted in the Federal Republic of Germany in the 1950s by Bertelsmann Verlag.

²³ For a historical overview of the German expedition film, see *Trivale Tropen: Exotische Reise- und Abenteuerfilme aus Deutschland 1919–1939*, ed. Jörg Schöning (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1997). For a broader analysis of ethnology in Nazi Germany, see Thomas Hauschild, ed., *Lebenslust und Fremdenfurcht: Ethnologie im Dritten Reich* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1995).

²⁴ Expedition films include *Abessinien von heute: Blickpunkt der Welt* (1935, Rikli), *Die Wildnis stirbt* (1936, Schomburgk), and *Rätsel der Urwaldhölle* (1938, Schulz-Kampfenkel).

²⁵ See Hans Schomburgk, *Mein Afrika: Erlebtes und Erlauschtes aus dem Innern Afrikas*, 2d ed. (Leipzig: Deutsche Buchwerkstätten, 1930); Otto Schulz-Kampfhennel, *Im afrikanischen Dschungel als Tierfänger und Urwaldjäger* (Berlin: Deutscher Verlag, 1937); and Martin Rikli, *Ich filmte für Millionen: Fahrten, Abenteuer und Erinnerungen eines Filmberichters* (Berlin: Schützen, 1942).

²⁶ "Jetzt auf Zeichen des Flugzeugführers hebt sich der Begleiter über den Rumpf, zielt mit dem kleinen, beweglichen Handkino, das fast aussieht wie eine große Pistole, nach den weißen Flanken und übertastet mit dem Objektiv die ganze glitzernde Bergwelt. Lautlos laufen die Filmrollen ab und schlucken das Geheimnis dieser Welt in sich hinein." Bernhard Krüger, *Das Abenteuer lockt: Filmexpeditionen, Expeditionsfilme, Ein Taschenbericht* (Berlin: Karl Curtis, 1940), 3.

²⁷ "Als leidenschaftliche und beharrliche Jäger, mit Objektiv und Blende edelstes Weidewerk ühend, bringen sie auf dem Filmstreifen eine Beute zur Strecke, die uns oft besser mundet als die Spielfilmkost, die in den Ateliers zubereitet wird." Frank Maraun, "Das Erlebnis entscheidet: Der abendfüllende Kulturfilm — von verschiedenen Seiten gesehen," *Der deutsche Film* 2, no. 7 (January 1938): 188.

²⁸ "Das Dokumentarfilm-Genre, das seinen spezifischen Blick und sein Erkenntnisinteresse auf außereuropäische Szenarien und nicht-europäische Ethnien richtete, war in seiner Blütezeit ein Projekt, um nicht zu sagen: ein Projekt kolonialer Weltaneignung und Welteroberung." Klaus Kreimeier, "Mechanik, Waffen und Haudegen überall: Expeditionsfilme: das bewaffnete Auge des Ethnografen," in *Triviale Tropen: Exotische Reise- und Abenteuerfilme aus Deutschland 1919–1945*, ed. Jörg Schöning (Munich: edition text + kritik, 1997), 47. For an in-depth study of how the documentary travelogue inscribes notions of race, gender, and empire, see Fatimah Tobing Rony, *The Third Eye: Race, Cinema and Ethnographic Spectacle* (Durham: Duke UP, 1996).

²⁹ "Der Kampf um das Leben wird dort Schritt für Schritt gekämpft. Wir haben diesen Kampf auf unseren Filmstreifen festgehalten, Peitschenschlangen, Tigerkatzen, Vogelspinnen, eine 'Gottesanbeterin,' die einen Schmetterling frisst, angreifende Jaguare — und nicht zuletzt die Völker der Dschungel: die Jaculos, die Araras, die Ivaros, schleichende Indios mit Giftpfeilen. . . . Diese Welt ist unheimlich — und doch in ihrer Unergründlichkeit immer wieder anziehend." Franz Eichhorn, "Das große Abenteuer: Kamerabeute am Amazonas," *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 278 (November 26, 1938).

³⁰ "Mit großem Mut und Entschlossenheit dringt [Wickham] in die grüne Hölle ein und besiegt alle Widerstände der wilden Natur, ihrer Tiere, der weißen und der farbigen Menschen," Hanns Bornemann, "Der Kampf um *Kautschuk*: Gefahren und Abenteuer miterlebt im Ufa-Palast am Zoo" (n.p., n.d.), *Kautschuk*, Document File 8701, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. *Kautschuk* was praised for its "Bilder von urzeitlicher Wildheit," Günther Schwark, "Kautschuk: Ufa-Palast am Zoo," *Film-Kurier* 263 (November 9, 1938).

³¹ "Wenn die Welt einen Rohstoff braucht, dann findet sie auch die Mittel, sich ihn zu verschaffen." *Kautschuk* film dialogue.

³² "In endlosen Reihen, Baum bei Baum." *Kautschuk* film dialogue.

³³ *Kautschuk* was seen as an important historical film because it illustrated "wie die Unabhängigkeit eines Landes von gewissen ausländischen Rohstoffen zu erreichen

ist." EF, "Deutscher Film am Amazonas, Kampf mit Schlangen und Pyranhas, Abenteuer um die Gummimilch," *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 262 (November 7, 1938).

³⁴ "Denn heute beträgt der Anteil Brasiliens an der Weltversorgung mit Kautschuk nur etwa 16 Prozent, während England durch die Tat Wickhams seine ostasiatische Kautschuk-Plantagenindustrie begründen und im Laufe der Zeit die Monopolstellung auf dem Gebiet der Gummiproduktion an sich reißen konnte. Nur eines hat Brasilien bis heute verhindern können, nämlich die Ausfuhr der nur in den Urwäldern von Amazonas vorkommenden Uricury-Palme, deren Vorhandensein für die Qualität des Kautschuks von hohem Werte ist." Himmel, "Eine Tat, die die Weltwirtschaft umformte."

³⁵ These statistics refer to supplies used by the United States military force during the Second World War but indicate the importance of rubber for the war effort. See James A. Plambeck, "United States Synthetic Rubber Program, 1939–1945." *Industrial Organic Chemistry, Synthetic Rubber*. <http://www.chem.ualberta.ca/~plambeck/che/p265/p06184.htm>. U of Alberta, 1996.

³⁶ "Herr Zimmermann berichtet über eine Anordnung der Reichsfilmkammer, wonach alle Filme, die unsere Feindmächte in besonders günstigem Licht erscheinen lassen, zurückgezogen werden. Von unseren Filmen wird hierdurch allein der Film *Kautschuk* betroffen, der die geschichtliche Tat eines Engländers verherrlicht. Der Vorstand beschließt, mit Rücksicht hierauf den Film *Kautschuk* in der nächsten Zeit nicht auszuliefern." Qtd. in Hennig Harmssen, "Flucht in die Unterhaltung: Verbote und Unverbindliches bestimmten den deutschen Film im Zweiten Weltkrieg," *Filmspiegel* (June 2, 1985).

³⁷ *Verklungene Melodie*, Censor-Card 47669, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. The censor cards provide a narrative description of the action but not the dialogues. All dialogues are taken from the videocassette copy of *Verklungene Melodie* available in commercial release.

³⁸ "Die Handlung spielt manchmal reichlich durcheinander und ist auch unlogisch und undramaturgisch. Aber wer verlangt alles von einem Film?" "Der Film ist ein einziger Genuß." Goebbels, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, I. 5: 139 and 162. Journalists complained that the film degraded their professional honor by depicting an unscrupulous reporter. Goebbels countered that "film has to show life, not theories or dreams." [Der Film muß das Leben zeigen, nicht Theorien oder Wunschträume.] The propaganda minister was incensed with journalists who did not notice the film's historical setting: "The press is protesting incessantly against the film *Verklungene Melodie* because it shows a fairly rotten journalist. Yet the film plays in 1932. I reject the protests with a cold shoulder" [Die Presse protestiert unentwegt gegen den Film "verklungene Melodie," weil da ein etwas mieser Journalist gezeigt wird. Dabei spielt der Film 1932. Ich lehne die Proteste kaltlächelnd ab]. Goebbels, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, I. 5: 174 and 176.

³⁹ "Es beruht, massenpsychologisch gesehen, auf einem Nachlassen der Suggestivkraft des Filmbildes." W. P., "Der 'falsche Lacher': Betrachtungen über die Psychologie des Publikums," *Film-Kurier* 155 (July 6, 1938). See also "Veit Harlan zum Thema 'Falsche Lacher' Ein Regisseur tritt für das Publikum an," *Film-Kurier* 157 (July 8, 1938). For a discussion of false laughter in Nazi cinema, see Eric Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and its Afterlife* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1996), 112–14.

⁴⁰ "Eine Einzelreaktion, der zunächst die allgemeine Resonanz des Publikums fehlt . . . durch ihn wird die Gemeinsamkeit des massenpsychischen Erlebens, wird das *Erlebnissetz*, das alle Zuschauer umstrickt hält, unterbrochen und beeinträchtigt." W. P., "Der 'falsche Lacher.'"

⁴¹ "Obwohl diese Szenen tatsächlich in der Sahara gedreht wurden, verweilt der Regisseur nur solange bei der filmisch gewiß ergiebigen Situation, als es die Entwicklung der Handlung und die Charakterisierung der beiden Hauptpersonen erfordert. Auch die übrigen Schauplätze — Berlin und New York — werden nie Bestandteil des Geschehens, sie bleiben immer Hintergrund für ein zartes Kammerspiel, das von Brigitte Horney und Willy Birgel getragen wird." Ludwig Eberlein, "Verklungene Melodie: Ein Tourjansky-Film im Gloria Palast," *Berliner Morgenpost* (n.d.), *Verklungene Melodie*, Document file 18268, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv. Albert Schneider also commented that the African location shots tended to present the desert as a combination of reality, emotion, and fantasy. See Albert Schneider, "Verklungene Melodie: Ein Ufa-Film, Gloria-Palast," *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 49 (February 26, 1938).

⁴² "Der kürzeste Weg zu sich selbst führt um die Welt herum." Motto to Graf Hermann Keyserling, *Das Reisetagebuch eines Philosophen*, 8th ed. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1932).

⁴³ Richard Phillips, *Mapping Men and Empire: A Geography of Adventure* (New York: Routledge, 1997), 13.

⁴⁴ "Seht ihr den Regenbogen in der Luft? Der Himmel öffnet seine goldenen Tore. Im Chor der Engel steht sie glänzend da. Sie hält den ewigen Sohn an ihrer Brust. Die Arme streckt sie lächelnd ihm entgegen. Sie winkt mir. Leichte Wolken heben mich. Der schwere Panzer wird zum Flügelkleid. Hinauf, hinauf, die Erde fleht zurück. Kurz ist der Schmerz, ewig ist die Freude." *Verklungene Melodie* film dialogue.

⁴⁵ "Für Thomas Gront und Barbara Lorenz (Willy Birgel, Brigitte Horney) wird der Flugzeugabsturz in der nordafrikanischen Wüste zum Sturz in übermächtige Emotionen und vor allem eine Alterität, die die gewohnten Rollen vertauscht. . . . Sie, die afrikaerfahrene und ebenso nerven- wie gefühlsstarke Frau, [beweist] eine Souveränität, die sie gegenüber dem zur Panik neigenden Gront zur Beschützerin werden läßt." Wolfgang Struck, "'Afrika zu unsern Füßen': Kinematographische Lufthohheiten über einem dunklen Kontinent," in *Geschichte(n): NS-Film — NS-Spuren heute*, ed. Hans Krah (Kiel: Ludwig, 1999), 68.

⁴⁶ "So schnupperte man etwas in der Stadt herum, deren europäische Viertel breite Straßen, große Hotels, Kinos, Geschäfte und Verwaltungsgebäude zeigen, in deren Oper sogar der Ring des Nibelungen aufgeführt wurde und deren Lichtreklame sich mit jeder europäischen Großstadt vergleichen läßt. . . . Der Zug führte an den riesigen Salzseen, den Schotts, vorbei, die eine angeregte Karl-May-Unterhaltung zur Folge hatten. . . . Das Medrasen. Unter dem Namen verbirgt sich die Grabstätte des Königs Jugurtha — was wiederum Erinnerungen an gymnasiale Lateinstunden bei unserer heiteren Reisegesellschaft heraufbeschwor." G. H., "Mit dem Film *Mitternachtswalzer* am Rande der Sahara," *Filmwelt* 49 (December 5, 1937).

⁴⁷ "Ich war nicht mehr in dieser Welt. Alles, was ich bisher gesehen und gefühlt hatte, lag hinter mir in Diesseits. Als hätte mich das Flugzeug aus meinem Leben herausgetragen, ohne daß ich das Leben verloren hatte. . . . Man kann doch von Biskra aus in

wenigen Minuten dem Diesseits entfliehen. Man muß nur die Augen dafür haben und die doppelte Belastung als halbe zu tragen verstehen." é, "Begegnung mit dem Jenseits: Filmarbeit über der Wüste, das wunderbare Erlebnis des Kameramannes" (n.p., n.d.), *Verklungene Melodie*, Document file 18268, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv. Günther Rittau went on to direct seven films in the Third Reich, including the adventure film *Brand im Ozean* (1939) and the war film *U-Boote westwärts* (1941).

⁴⁸ "Man fängt den Film an im großen Stil und sieht plötzlich voller Erschrecken, daß man wieder im Kammerspiel gelandet ist." Hans Spielhofer, "Der wichtigste Film des Monats," *Der deutsche Film* 2, no. 10 (April 1938): 289.

⁴⁹ "Die originelle Verwendung einiger Städteaufnahmen sei besonders erwähnt. Hier zeigt sich auch das starke Bildgefühl Tourjanskis. Der Ruf nach Barbara hallt über den Häusermeeren der Weltstädte und veranschaulicht das Aussichtslose des Suchens." Georg Herzberg, "Verklungene Melodie/Gloria-Palast," *Film-Kurier* 48 (February 26, 1938).

⁵⁰ Anton Kaes, *From Hitler to Heimat: The Return of History as Film* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1989), 165.

⁵¹ *Systemzeit* (the time of the system) was a derogatory term commonly used by National Socialists to denote the decadence of the Weimar Republic (1918–1933).

⁵² "Sie kennen mich nicht. Ich lebe für etwas ganz anders. Ich muß kämpfen. Ich brauche die Abwechslung. Ich kann nirgendwo bleiben. Ich muß frei sein. Ich bin ein großer Egoist. Ich habe nie das Bedürfnis, lange mit jemand zusammen zu sein und das werde ich auch nie tun. Ich will, daß Sie glücklich werden, und Sie werden nur unglücklich sein, wenn Sie sich an mich binden." *Verklungene Melodie* film dialogue.

⁵³ "Dieser Mann ist gemessen und von einer disziplinierten Leidenschaftlichkeit. Er ist sehr gepflegt und ein Kavalier in dem guten Sinn des ritterlichen, selbstbewußten und höflichen Mannes. . . . Aber er war immer auch der elegante, kluge, mutige, eiserne, verbindliche, von kalter Leidenschaft getragene Spieler." "Im Scheinwerfer: Staatsschauspieler Willy Birgel — der Künstler und Mensch," Beilage zur *Filmwelt* 52 (December 23, 1938).

⁵⁴ "Das Wort Kavalier würde den Nagel auf den Kopf treffen, wenn es nicht eine Spur zu seicht und verwischt wäre. Es müßte noch etwas anderes hinzukommen: die Atmosphäre eines Menschen, der sich stets in der Gewalt hat. Der mit Haltung liebt, leidet, verzichtet. Der nicht mit großen Gesten und schillernden Worten in Erscheinung tritt. Birgels Spielhaltung ist fast soldatisch zu nennen. . . . Er drückt Gefühle aus, in dem er sie unterdrückt." Theodor Riegler, "Im Scheinwerfer: Willy Birgel," Beilage zur *Filmwelt* 16 (April 19, 1940).

⁵⁵ Werner is described as "eine weiche Künstlernatur." *Verklungene Melodie, Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 2772 (Berlin: Vereinigte Verlagsgesellschaften Franke & Co., n.d.).

⁵⁶ "Wenn er stark genug ist, seine Individualität zu wahren und wenn man ihn nicht auf den Salonlöwen abstellt, dann kann er der erste Repräsentant des Typs werden, den wir so brennend suchen: der 'He-man,' der kein Flegel ist." Spielhofer, "Der wichtigste Film des Monats."

⁵⁷ Horney possessed "Kraft und Gesundheit, gepaart mit Charme und Verstand," and further: "*Innerlich* betrachtet, ist sie die Frau mit der ständigen Lust und dem

ständigen Willen zu einem großen Erlebnis, die sich dem Abenteuer stellt, mag sie in ihm siegen oder untergehen." Hans-Joachim Schlamp, *Brigitte Horney*, Künstler-Biographien 1 (Berlin: Verlag Robert Mölich, n.d.), 4. For a similar discription, see Ma, "Brigitte Horney," *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 6 (December 1938): 156–59.

⁵⁸ Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion*, 141.

⁵⁹ Renate Brinkmann "weiß den Mann ihres Henzens neben sich — den Mann, der in ihr die Heimat fand und mit ihr ein neues Leben erobern wird!" *Kongo-Express, Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 3051 (Berlin: Vereinigte Verlagsgesellschaften Franke & Co., n.d.).

⁶⁰ The image of America in Nazi Germany was based largely on the critique of America and modernity from the Weimar Republic. See Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, and Edward Dimendberg, eds., "Imagining America: Fordism and Technology," in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1995), 393–411; Anton Kaes, "Mass Culture and Modernity: Notes Toward a Social History of Early American and German Cinema," in *America and the Germans: An Assessment of a Three-hundred-year History*, ed. Franz Trommler and Joseph McVeigh (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 1985), 2: 317–32; and Hans Dieter Schäfer, *Das gespaltene Bewußtsein: Deutsche Kultur und Lebenswirklichkeit 1933–1945* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 1983).

⁶¹ For an excellent study of *Der verlorene Sohn* and *Glückskinder*, see Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion*, 71–124. See also Franz A. Birgel, "Luis Trenker: A Rebel in the Third Reich?" in *Cultural History through a National Socialist Lens: Essays on the Cinema of the Third Reich*, Robert C. Reimer, ed. (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2000), 37–64.

⁶² Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion*, 86.

⁶³ "Die Leute wollen nur vergessen, alle Sorgen, alles Schwere. Die sind wie toll. Das ist ein einziger Rausch, nur um einmal glücklich zu sein." *Verklungene Melodie* film dialogue.

⁶⁴ Erich Waschneck (1887–1970) directed twenty-three feature films in the Third Reich including the musical *Die göttliche Jette* (1937) and the anti-Semitic propaganda film *Die Rothschilds* (1940).

⁶⁵ *Frauen für Golden Hill*, Censor-Card 50106, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. The censor cards include a description of the scenes but not the dialogues. All dialogues are taken from the 35-mm film print *Frauen für Golden Hill* available at the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. *Frauen für Golden Hill* did not do well at the box office and sustained an estimated loss of 69,000 RM, see Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 428.

⁶⁶ Hans Bertram, *Flug in die Hölle: Bericht von der Bertram-Atlantis Expedition* (Berlin: Drei Masken, 1933). Bertram's book was not only a best seller in the Third Reich; it remains popular in Germany today in a recent reprint edition, see *Flug in die Hölle*, Ullstein Buch 22467 (Frankfurt a. M.: Ullstein, 1986 and 1991). In 1985/1986 ARD made a series on Bertram's aviation adventures for television.

⁶⁷ Both *Hitlerjunge Quex* and *Triumph des Willens* were reasonably successful at the box office. From its premiere in September 1933 to January 1934, *Hitlerjunge Quex* reached a million viewers. *Triumph des Willens* premiered in March 1935 at discounted prices in the first-run movie theaters of seventy German cities and enjoyed record-breaking crowds. Both films were routinely shown without cost but in obligatory sessions at schools, in the Hitler Youth Organized Film Hour, and at the

NSDAP district film exhibitions. See Martin Loiperdinger, *Rituale der Mobilmachung: Der Parteitagefilm Triumph des Willens von Leni Riefenstahl* (Opladen: Leske & Budrich, 1987), 50; and Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion*, 56.

⁶⁸ "Nur zwei nehmen eine Sonderstellung ein. Sie sind durch eine alte Fliegerkame-radschaft auf Leben und Tod mit einander verbunden; sie haben auch keine Frauen haben wollen." *Frauen für Golden Hill, Das Programm von heute* 326 (Berlin: Das Programm von heute: Zeitschrift für Film und Theater, GmbH, 1938).

⁶⁹ The love triangle as the tension between comradeship, family, and community is a staple of the adventure film and the war film. See for example *Brand im Ozean*, *Kongo Express*, *Wunschkonzert*, *Spähtrupp Hallgarten*, *Kampfgeschwader Lutzow*, and *Besatzung Dora*.

⁷⁰ "Da die Homosexuellen erfahrungsgemäß für den normalen Geschlechtsverkehr unbrauchbar werden, wirkt sich die Gleichgeschlechtlichkeit auch auf den Nachwuchs aus und wird zwangsläufig zu einem Geburtenrückgang führen. Die Folge davon ist eine Schwächung der allgemeinen Volkskraft, durch die nicht zuletzt die militärische Belange eines Volkes gefährdet werden." Qtd. in Stefan Maiwald and Gerd Mischler, *Sexualität unter dem Hakenkreuz: Manipulation und Vernichtung der Intimsphäre im NS-Staat* (Hamburg: Europa Verlag, 1999), 171. For studies on the persecution of homosexuals in Nazi Germany, see Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991); and Richard Plant, *The Pink Triangle: The Nazi War against Homosexuals* (New York, 1986).

⁷¹ "Das ewig Weibliche ist eben der natürliche und notwendige Angelpunkt des männlichen Daseins, der Ansporn und Ausgleich." "Frauen ziehen durch die Wüste: Anmerkungen zu dem Film *Frauen für Golden Hill*," *Filmwelt* 43 (October 21, 1938).

⁷² Mel Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic: The Erotic World of Weimar Berlin* (Venice, CA: Feral House, 2000), 121.

⁷³ The Chocolate Kiddies, an eleven-piece jazz band lead by Sam Wooding (1895–1985), played at the Admiralpalast in May 1925. For information on Josephine Baker as a European phenomenon, see Peter Jelavich, "The Americanization of Entertainment: Jazz and Black Performers," in *Berlin Cabaret* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1993), 165–75; Anton Kaes, Martin Jay, Edward Dimendberg, eds., "The Roaring Twenties: Cabaret and Urban Environment," in *The Weimar Republic Sourcebook* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1994), 551–68; and Nancy Nenno, "Femininity, the Primitive, and Modern Urban Space: Josephine Baker in Berlin," in *Women in the Metropolis*, ed. Katharina von Ankum (Berkeley: U of California P, 1997), 145–61; and Rony, *The Third Eye*, 199–203.

⁷⁴ Josephine Baker and Jo Bouillon, "Candide," in *Josephine*, trans. Mariana Fitzpatrick (New York: Paragon House, 1988), 55.

⁷⁵ Qtd. in Nenno, "Femininity, the Primitive, and Modern Urban Space," 155.

⁷⁶ Qtd. in Phyllis Rose, *Jazz Cleopatra: Josephine Baker in Her Time* (New York: Doubleday, 1989), 23.

⁷⁷ See Nenno, "Femininity, the Primitive, and Modern Urban Space," 158.

⁷⁸ See Knud Wolfram, *Tanzdielen und Vergnügungspaläste: Berliner Nachtleben in den dreißiger und vierziger Jahren*, 3d ed. (Berlin: Edition Hentrich, 1992), 185–89.

⁷⁹ Josua is also marked as African-American when he plays on the harmonica the American folk song "Swanee River," written in 1851 by Stephen C. Foster for blackface minstrelsy. Foster's song was popularized in a series of motion pictures all called *Swanee River* (1925, Dave Flisher; 1931, Raymond Cannon; and the best known version starring Don Ameche, 1939, Sidney Lanfield). Josua's mail-order bride, a large black woman named Mammy, is likewise a stereotypical and exaggerated African-American character played by an actress credited with the name of Josephine Bachert.

⁸⁰ Alice: "Endlich kommen die Männer da draußen mal auf eine vernünftige Idee . . . Sie haben anscheinend wohl nicht gemerkt, daß es hier um das moralischste Geschäft geht, das die Firma C. P. Barryman jemals gemacht hat. Dreizehn einsame Männer wollen in den Stand der Ehe treten . . . in den heiligen Stand der Ehe." *Frauen für Golden Hill* film dialogue.

⁸¹ "Sehe ich nicht richtig nach 'Vamp' aus? . . . aus einer eigennützigen, oberflächlichen Frau wird ein anständiger, guter Kamerade." "Kampf um die Frau in Australiens Wüste: Kirsten Heibergs erste Hauptrolle. *Frauen für Golden Hill* und Kameradentreue" (n.p., n.d.), *Frauen für Golden Hill*, Document File 5697, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

⁸² "Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuss auf Liebe eingestellt . . . Männer umschwärmen mich wie Motten um das Licht, und wenn sie verbrennen, dafür kann ich nichts." *Der blaue Engel* film dialogue.

⁸³ For an excellent analysis of *Zu neuen Ufern*, see Marc Silberman, *German Cinema: Texts in Context* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1995), 51–65.

⁸⁴ "In ihren Chansons lehnt sie sich spürbar an Zarah Leanders Vortragsstil an." Günther Schwark, "Frauen für Golden Hill," *Film-Kurier* 5 (January 6, 1939).

⁸⁵ "Ich bin eine Frau, die die Männer betört, die mit allen spielt und keinem gehört, und ich will so bleiben, wie ich bin, wie ich bin. Ich habe ein Lächeln, das niemand versteht, das die Männer anzieht wie ein Magnet. Und ich will so bleiben, wie ich bin, wie ich bin. Man wollte mich ändern und hat's oft probiert. Doch man hat mich dabei unterschätzt. Ich habe im Leben fast immer riskiert, alles auf eine Karte gesetzt. Es ist auf der Welt dazu gemacht, daß man schnell seine Träume vergißt. Ich hatte das Leben ganz anders gedacht. Doch ich nehme es, wie es ist." *Frauen für Golden Hill* film dialogue.

⁸⁶ "In einem Goldgräberlager braucht man Frauen, einfache Frauen, die auch arbeiten können." *Frauen für Golden Hill* film dialogue.

⁸⁷ "Ich stelle es mir herrlich vor, in der unendlichen Einsamkeit da draußen mit einem Mann zu leben, dem man alles sein kann." *Frauen für Golden Hill* film dialogue.

⁸⁸ "Es gibt tausende verschiedene Dinge eine Ehe auseinanderzubringen, aber es gibt meiner Erfahrung nach nur eins, was zwei Menschen fest und innig miteinander verbindet: Sie müssen Gelegenheit haben, sich gegenseitig zu helfen." *Frauen für Golden Hill* film dialogue.

⁸⁹ "Violet ist ein netter Kerl, aber unsere Kameradschaft ist mir mehr wert. Die Frau muß für uns unantastbar sein." *Frauen für Golden Hill* film dialogue.

⁹⁰ "Du hast gegen unser Oberstes Gesetz verstossen. Du hast die Waffe gegen einen Kameraden erhoben. Wir haben nicht die Befugnis über dich richten zu sitzen, aber wir wollen nichts mehr mit dir zu tun haben. Wir geben dir Proviant für sechs

Wochen. Wie du zur Küste kommst, ist deine Sache. Wir sind fertig mit dir!" *Frauen für Golden Hill* film dialogue.

⁹¹ "Der Gemeinschaftsgedanke . . . ist deutlich spürbar und erkennbar z.B. in allen den Filmen, in denen ein Mensch seine Pflicht gegenüber der Gemeinschaft erfüllt, indem er sich zu einem großen Opfer fähig und bereit zeigt. . . . [I]mmer da spürten wir das Gesetz, das ein Volk am Leben erhält, das Gesetz der Gemeinschaft, der bedingungslosen Kamaderadschaft." Felix Henseleit, "Gemeinschaftserlebnis im Film," *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 14 (May 18, 1940).

⁹² "Sein Freund hat zwar sein Leben lassen müssen, aber die Rettungstat an der ganzen Gemeinschaft tilgt seine Schuld an dem einen." *Frauen für Golden Hill, Das Programm von heute* 326 (Berlin: Das Programm von heute: Zeitschrift für Film und Theater, GmbH, 1937).

⁹³ "Haus Vaterland" billed itself as "Deutschlands größter Vergnügungspalast" offering "eine billige Erholungsreise." See Wolfram, *Tanzdielen und Vergnügungspaläste*, 16–19; and Gordon, *Voluptuous Panic*, 224–25.

⁹⁴ "Der Begriff des Abenteuerlichen, eng verbunden mit Gefahren, Not und Kampf und schließlich Sieg, erweckt auch heute . . . erstaunlich viel Widerhall . . . Und es hat tiefere Ursachen, wenn wir heute geradezu als Inbegriff des Abenteuerlichen, als das klassische Abenteuer schlechthin, jene Geschehnisse ansprechen, die mit der aufregenden Suche nach Gold verbunden sind." "Frauen ziehen durch die Wüste."

⁹⁵ "Nationalsozialisten fühlten sich zudem von dem 'wagemutigen Tatendrang' der Amerikaner und durch ihre Eroberung des 'Goldenen Westens' in ihren Träumen, als 'bewaffnete Kolonisten im Osten neues Land zu erobern, bestätigt." Schäfer, *Das gesplante Bewußtsein*, 128. For studies on the German Western in Nazi Germany, see Jan-Christopher Horak, "Luis Trenker's *The Kaiser of California*: How the West was Won, Nazi Style," *Historical Journal of Film, Radio, and Television* 6.2 (1986): 181–88; and Lutz P. Koepnick, "Unsettling America: German Westerns and Modernity," *Modernism/Modernity* 2.3 (1995): 1–22.

⁹⁶ "[Die Goldgräber geben] die Hoffnung nicht auf, eines Tages so viel erarbeitet zu haben, daß sie dahin heimkehren können, woher sie kamen. Denn einem rechten Kerl kommt es darauf an, seine Heimat nicht zu verlieren, sollte ihn auch das Schicksal als Pionier im fremden Land festhalten." "Frauen ziehen durch die Wüste."

⁹⁷ "Es ist genug Wasser, um morgen den Marsch an die Küste anzutreten, den Marsch mit Frau und Kind in ein Land, wo Felder und Wiesen, Brunnen und Teich sind." *Frauen für Golden Hill, Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 2907 (Berlin: Vereinigte Verlagsgesellschaften Franke & Co., 1938).

⁹⁸ "Trotzdem sich hier abenteuerliche und ungewöhnliche Dinge begeben, hat der Zuschauer immer das Gefühl, daß er nicht *außerhalb* der Ereignisse steht, daß sie ihm nicht fremd bleiben, — ja, daß er sie schließlich auch *selbst* erleben könnte." Felix Henseleit, "Frauen für Golden Hill," *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 5 (January 6, 1939), emphasis in original.

⁹⁹ "Man mixe: einen der ersten Tonfilme *Braut Nr. 68* und *Zu neuen Ufern* und was daraus entsteht, nennt sich *Frauen für Golden Hill*. Hier wird des Unwahrscheinlichen reichlich viel getan. Dreizehn hübsche Mädchen, vorwiegend elegant gekleidet, fühlen sich glücklich, den rauen, versoffenen Goldgräbern in ihr primitives Dasein als Ehefrau zu folgen, d.h. nicht zu folgen, denn sie heiraten sie ja, ohne sie gesehen zu haben! Und

welch ein Wunder! Es geht gut. Alle sind glücklich. Nimmt man nun noch dazu eine Frau zwischen zwei Männern, einen Vamp, der zum Schluß geläutert wird und der in Leander-Manier mit einer ähnlichen, wenn nicht so geschulten Stimme, ähnliche Chansons singt und verbrämt das ganze noch mit Sandstürmen, Wassermangel und anderen Katastrophen, nicht zu vergessen: Freundestreue bis zur Selbstopferung, so müßte das doch mit dem Teufel zugehen, wenn das kein Erfolgsfilm würde (-meinen die Hersteller, oder?).” Ilse Wehner, “Filme des Monats,” *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 8 (February 1939): 228–29.

¹⁰⁰ “Manchmal, wenn mich ein neugieriges Verlangen nach solchen abenteuerlichen Dingen anwandelt, habe ich den Reisenden beneidet, der solche Wunder mit andern Wundern in lebendiger Verbindung sieht. Aber auch er wird ein anderer Mensch. Es wandelt niemand ungestraft unter Palmen, und die Gesinnungen ändern sich gewiß in einem Lande, wo Elefanten und Tiger zu Hause sind.” Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *Wahlverwandtschaften*, ed. Hans-J. Weitz (Frankfurt a. M.: Insel, 1972), 173.

¹⁰¹ Jamie Owen Daniel, “Reclaiming the ‘Terrain of Fantasy’: Speculations on Ernst Bloch, Memory, and the Resurgence of Nationalism,” in *Not Yet: Reconsidering Ernst Bloch*, ed. Jamie Owen Daniel and Tom Moylan (London: Verso, 1997), 59.

¹⁰² “Denkt doch bloß, Leute, wie das sein wird, denkt doch bloß, wenn so um uns rum lauter Deutsche sein werden — und nich, wenn du in einen Laden reinkommst, daß da einer jiddisch redet oder polnisch, sondern deutsch. Und nich nur das ganze Dorf wird deutsch sein, sondern ringsum und rundherum wird alles deutsch sein. Und wir, wir werden so mitten, innen sein, im Herzen von Deutschland. Denkt bloß, Leute, wie das sein wird. Und warum soll das nich sein? Auf der guten alten warmen Erde Deutschlands werden wir wieder wohnen. Daheim und zu Hause. Und in der Nacht, in unseren Betten, wenn wir da aufwachen aus’m Schlaf, da wird das Herz in ‘nem süßen Schreck plötzlich wissen, wir schlafen ja mitten in Deutschland, daheim und zu Hause, und ringsum ist die tröstliche Nacht, und ringsum da schlagen Millionen deutsche Herzen und pochen in einem fort leise: Daheim bist du, Mensch, daheim, daheim bei den Deinen. Dann wird uns ganz wunderbarlich sein ums Herz, daß die Krume des Ackers und das Stück Lehm und der Feldstein und das Zittergras und der schwankende Halm, der Haselnußstrauch und die Bäume, daß das alles deutsch ist, wie wir selber, zugehörig zu uns, weil’s ja gewachsen is aus den Millionen Herzen der Deutschen, die eingegangen sind in die Erde und zur deutschen Erde geworden sind. Denn wir leben nicht nur ein deutsches Leben, wir sterben auch einen deutschen Tod. Und tot bleiben wir auch deutsch und sind ‘n ganzes Stück von Deutschland, eine Krume des Ackers für den Korn der Enkel, und aus unserem Herzen, da wächst der Rebstock empor, in die Sonne — in die Sonne, Leute, die nich wehtut und nicht senzt, ohne zugleich auch Süßigkeit zu spenden, und ringsum singen die Vögel, und alles ist deutsch, alles Kinder, wie unser Lied, wollen wir’s nich singen, gerade jetzt, unser Lied? [A chorus strikes up the sentimental folksong “Nach der Heimat möcht’ ich wieder.”]” Dialogue from *Heimkehr* (1941, Ucicky) qtd. in Gerald Trimmel, *Heimkehr: Strategien eines nationalsozialistischen Films* (Vienna: Werner Eichbauer, 1998), 118–19.

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“Film as a psychological weapon in war”: *Der deutsche Film* (1941).

3: The Celluloid War: The Home-Front Film

SHORTLY AFTER GERMANY invaded Poland in September 1939, leading Nazi film journals began to question the role film would play in the hostilities. Would the muses be silenced by the din of battle or could the power of cinema to construct an alternate reality, capture objects, transform people into images, and reorganize time and space all be harnessed for the military struggle? Critics asserted that film could function as a powerful ideological weapon since it shared essential properties with the military: “Film has become a part of the armed forces. Like the latter it realizes the decisive characteristics of technology: speed, precision, thrusting force into the distance.”¹

Despite the Nazi’s fascination with war and cinema, they produced fewer than twenty feature films about the contemporary Second World War experience: the combat film gives expression to the myth of the hardened warrior as the quintessential Aryan male;² the furlough film situates the soldier in the homeland where he enjoys an adventure of the heart;³ and finally, the home-front film explores the bond between the civilian populace and the front-line soldier in wartime love stories and family dramas.⁴

The home-front film is especially noteworthy because it uses culture and entertainment to package war for sale to the German people. In this chapter I will examine the manner in which three home-front films cloak their ideological message in entertaining stories, enchanting audiences while mobilizing them psychologically for war. As propaganda vehicles promoting the idea of a nation united against the enemy, Nazi home-front films reflected developments on the battlefield and can be divided into three phases. The first phase corresponded to the Blitzkrieg victories (1939–1940), the second phase to the intensified struggle against the Allies (1941–1942), and the third phase to the repeated military defeats (1943–1945). Three films in particular, *Wunschkonzert*, *Die große Liebe*, and *Die Degenhardts*, best typify the official discourse on war prevailing in each period.

Filmed against the backdrop of the swift French defeat in 1940, *Wunschkonzert* (Request Concert) exemplifies the first phase because it presented a cheerful homeland adapting to the dictates of war while exuding optimism and confidence in victory. Through popular culture and light musical entertainment, the film attempted to appeal to the audience emotionally and win it over to the war effort.

As the war continued with no final victory in sight, the state needed to convince the civilian population to sacrifice family members and a personal life for the promise of a brighter future. During this second phase, in 1942 when Allied Forces were carpet-bombing German cities with ever greater frequency, *Die große Liebe* (True Love) furnished the audience with upbeat songs, a sentimental love story, and role models to cope with war-related stress. By drawing structural parallels between musical and military spectacles, the film also depicted war as a type of theater that demanded participation from soldier and civilian alike.

In the third and final phase, after the disaster at Stalingrad, when defeat seemed inevitable, the home-front film tried to persuade civilians to endure death as a soothing end to earthly existence and a necessary measure to insure that German cultural traditions would carry on. In 1944 *Die Degenhardts* (The Degenhardts) presented German high culture, specifically classical music and architecture, as the glue that bound the folk together and guaranteed it immortality.

Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels was determined to direct the war like a staged event, catering to his audience's needs while simultaneously manipulating public opinion in accordance with the changing military situation. With the onset of war, Goebbels's immediate task was to convince the masses that the armed conflict was a just cause. The German populace greeted the news of war in September 1939 with skepticism. In contrast to the enthusiastic war fever at the onset of the First World War, most Germans were ambivalent about the hostilities and accepted their duty with guarded reservations.⁵ During this early phase in the fighting, Goebbels needed to persuade the people to accept the war as a necessary challenge imposed on Germany but one that promised victory in the foreseeable future. The Polish were the aggressors, he argued; the Germans were defending themselves and their way of life; sacrifices were necessary but triumph was inevitable.⁶

The Propaganda Ministry was quick to assure the populace that the military conflict would not alter German cultural life. In contrast to the "aggressor" enemy states who were concerned with mere existence, Germany would continue to offer its citizens various forms of relaxation and edification.⁷ Every effort was made to boost morale and ensure that civilian life remained as stable as possible. Going to the movies and listening to the radio could provide distraction from food and coal shortages or worries over family members in the service. Motion pictures could play an important role in raising everyone's spirits, and keeping movie theaters open would demonstrate the unbroken continuity and power of German culture even under duress. Goebbels promised, "The darker the streets are, the brighter our theaters and movie houses will shine in the splendor of lights."⁸ Indeed, the motion-picture industry flourished during the war, providing Goebbels with a captive audience for his program of instruction through entertainment.⁹

National Socialism was a vastly popular movement precisely because it promised the masses stability and the guarantee of a private sphere in which one could enjoy popular consumer products such as those offered by the entertainment industry.¹⁰ The regime successfully addressed the psychological needs of its clientele and balanced those needs with its own military objectives. The Propaganda Ministry attempted to allay dissatisfaction and mitigate hardships because, in Goebbels's words, "No war can be won without optimism; it is just as important as cannons and guns."¹¹

The Mass Media Play Along: *Wunschkonzert* (1940)

In order to generate widespread optimism, Goebbels conceived the motion picture *Wunschkonzert* (Request Concert) based on an immensely popular radio show featuring soldiers' musical requests. Goebbels personally worked on the screenplay and chose much of the cast.¹² The film, directed by Eduard von Borsody, was an enormous box-office hit. From its premiere on December 30, 1940, to the war's end, it reached an audience of some 26.5 million viewers and ranked among the top grossing films of the Third Reich. Borsody's film has two stars: the Second World War and armed forces radio.



The bachelor trio in the request concert: *Wunschkonzert*.

In *Wunschkonzert* war takes place on the symbolic level of art and popular entertainment and is presented in terms of musical performance, sports, technology, comedy, and heroism. The violence of battle is replaced with a quest for superior speed, mobility, information retrieval, and detection made possible through new technologies. Combat becomes a competition to achieve the highest levels of perception rather than a collective act of aggression. Since war is divested of its most destructive aspects, it becomes harmless, enjoyable, or at worst a tolerable and temporary burden to endure for the sake of the nation.

Wunschkonzert visualizes armed forces' radio for moviegoers to illustrate how soldiers and civilians can form a single unified front. The film weaves together musical performances, documentary footage, and a multitude of fictional stories connecting home front and battle front.¹³ Along with newsreel footage of the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games, the Polish Campaign, and the actual "Request Concert" radio show, there are comic and dramatic vignettes dealing with soldiers and their loved ones. Each wartime experience is narratively linked to a musical performance on the radio, which unites the folk in its support of the war and in its consumption of entertainment. The radio, rather than any single character or narrative strand, becomes the unifying principle in Borsody's film and the means to achieve the *Volksgemeinschaft*, a harmonious national community bound by blood and cultural traditions.

Radio was a powerful tool in the Nazi campaign to coordinate all cultural activities and the flow of information. Soon after his appointment as propaganda minister, Goebbels stressed the value of radio in disseminating ideas and declared it "the most modern and most important instrument for influencing the masses."¹⁴ Already nationalized in 1932, the broadcasting industry came under the jurisdiction of the Reich Chamber of Culture as part of the *Gleichschaltung*. As early as March 1933, Goebbels called upon broadcasting directors to create radio programs that instilled political convictions in the masses without being openly instructive:

Just don't become boring. Just no tedium. Just don't place convictions on a serving plate. Just don't believe one could best operate in the service of the national government if one played blaring marches evening after evening. . . . There has to be conviction, but conviction does not have to mean boredom. Fantasy has to take into consideration all means and methods in order to let the broad masses hear the new conviction in a modern, current and interesting way, interesting and informative, but not pedantic. Radio should never displease with words, one senses the intention and is put in a bad mood.¹⁵

In order to implement this propaganda campaign of instruction through entertainment, Goebbels ensured that the *Volksempfänger*, a cheap and mass-produced radio, was readily available to the populace.¹⁶ By 1936 one half of all

German households owned a radio. With the onset of the Second World War, Goebbels began to attach even more importance to the wireless as a medium to convey authorized information while also providing safe distraction through entertainment. Immediately after Germany invaded Poland in September 1939, for example, Goebbels donated 1,500 radios to soldiers on the front.¹⁷ Listening to foreign radio broadcasts, by contrast, was forbidden by the law on “extraordinary measures for the radio” from September 1, 1939. Violators were subject to imprisonment and, in rare cases, even death.¹⁸

National Socialists recognized that the capacity of radio to be unhampered by spatial dimensions or limitations lent the medium symbolic character as the transmitter of an unseen, inner reality. As Peter Reichel has noted, “Precisely its ‘spatial freedom’ seems to qualify the radio as medium of an ‘imaginary realm’ to convey the ‘inner unity’ of all Germans as a community.”¹⁹ In the context of the Second World War, radio also established a metaphoric linkage between the goals of battle (soldiers capturing and mastering territory) and the achievements of spatial conquest through technology (radio waves overcoming the distance between home front and war front).

Radio’s symbolic potential reached its zenith in the “Wunschkonzert für die Wehrmacht” (Request Concert for the Armed Forces), which premiered on October 1, 1939, and was broadcast live every Sunday afternoon from the studios of the Berlin Broadcasting Center.²⁰ Radio announcer Heinz Goedecke would take requests from soldiers and relay personal messages in return for charitable donations. Through this shared radio program, the nation united behind the war effort. As if attached by some invisible umbilical cord, a factory worker, a mother mending socks, and a child playing with a toy could participate in the collective and sanitized war experience by simply listening to the wireless. The film program for *Wunschkonzert* summarizes the magical effect radio had on the nation:

A voice vibrates through the air. “Here is the greater German Radio! We are beginning the Request Concert for the Armed Forces.” A magical ribbon embraces front and homeland. In the dugout in France, in the submarine on an enemy mission, in the air base on the coast, in the quiet room of a mother, in thousands and hundreds of thousands of homes, everywhere the flood of word and song and music resounds and vibrates. . . . The sorrow and joy of the individual, the unknown, the nameless become the sorrow and joy of the entire nation. All hearts beat in the same rhythm of feelings.²¹

According to one contemporary critic, “Request Concert” was much more than just entertainment, it actually transmitted the nation’s inner feelings and military goals:

Whoever has heard such a “Request Concert for the Armed Forces” knows how in such hours folk and army feel connected like one single

large family. He understands the incredible meaning of the radio as the only medium today that is in the position to link eighty million people in a great communal experience. Thus the "Request Concert" also conveys to every German *the feeling of power and belonging*.²²

Radio and film technologies radically changed how the masses perceived war. Radio brought up-to-date war reports into the home, work place, social club, and school. It connected villager and city dweller, worker and housewife, young and old, while making physical presence unnecessary for instantaneous participation in the military action. Radio also brought about a change in the sense of public and private space by transforming the traditionally private realm into a public forum. Film, and especially newsreels, brought scenes from the war front into every neighborhood cinema on a weekly basis. The intimate battle experiences of soldiers in distant regions were transmitted with great speed into formerly private environs of the home front.

The manner in which the motion picture *Wunschkonzert* utilizes the media of radio and film to capitalize on changes in perception caused by technological advances corresponds to Walter Benjamin's theory of the fascist aesthetic. In his essay "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," Benjamin notes that new technologies seek to fulfill "the desire of contemporary masses to bring things 'closer' spatially and humanly."²³ Borsody's film satisfies both longings. By incorporating into the medium of film a successful radio program that stresses audience participation and unites soldier and civilian, *Wunschkonzert* overcomes physical distance and emotional separation. Furthermore, by connecting each emotionally charged wartime experience with a sentimental musical performance, it also triumphs over the coldly impersonal aspect of the scientific age. Finally, *Wunschkonzert* brings things closer spatially and humanly by providing a visual image of famous personalities known only by sound in the radio program and by framing newsreel footage within the context of a fictional but very human story.

The *Wunschkonzert* radio program and motion picture are both direct artistic outgrowths of the Second World War and therefore correspond to Benjamin's seminal notion: "Fascism [. . .] expects war to supply the artistic gratification of a sense perception that has been changed by technology."²⁴ Benjamin asserts that the aestheticizing of politics so central to fascism is merely a prelude to the more dangerous and logical development: the aestheticizing of war. *Wunschkonzert* participates in this discourse by depicting war as more than just a scenario against which the story unfolds. War becomes the key organizing principle of life, determining work, love, friendship, birth, and death. It also allows the individual members of the community to become strong, courageous, honorable, and charitable. Equally important, war entertains the German community in the sense that it creates extreme situations such as separation, economic hardship, and death, which are then sublimated

through music. *Wunschkonzert* provides a musical response to every wartime experience, shifting war from the political to the aesthetic realm.

Wunschkonzert opens to the backdrop of the 1936 Olympic Games. Immortalized in Leni Riefenstahl's film *Olympia*, the Berlin Games were not merely a tribute to the highest physical achievements of mankind but also a media event of unparalleled propaganda value. They were the first Games ever to be broadcast over short-wave radio to some forty countries and to be televised; twenty-five TV halls were set up in Berlin and Leipzig. Berlin was transformed to represent Germany as a strong, harmonious, and, above all, peace-loving nation. The streets were decorated with Olympic flags and swastikas while anti-Semitic signs were taken down and publication of the inflammatory newspaper *Der Stürmer* was temporarily suspended. Hitler allocated over 100 million Reichsmarks to stage what were the most spectacular Games to date. Government-sponsored entertainment included fireworks, special concerts, operas, exhibitions, and lavish parties for thousands.²⁵

Hitler saw in the Olympics a chance to show the world a peace-minded Germany, although he was planning military conquest.²⁶ Just a few months before the Games, on March 7, 1936, Hitler sent troops into the demilitarized Rhineland, an act in breach of the Locarno Treaty. On August 2, one day after the opening ceremonies, Hitler deployed the Condor Legion to participate in the Spanish Civil War. During the Games, Hitler secretly ordered German industry to convert to a war economy within the next four years and also instructed the military to prepare for an offensive war in the East.²⁷ The Olympics were thus transported from the realm of sports to the political arena, effectively depicting Germany's goodwill to all nations of the world as it secretly set its course on war.

The mainstay of the Olympic Games — athletic competition — is all but missing from *Wunschkonzert*. Despite the abundance of available sports footage from newsreels and *Olympia*, Borsody chose to concentrate on the opening ceremonies of August 1, 1936. Athletic performance denotes physical strength, agility, and beauty of the human form, yet it is never depicted in the film. Thus, the emphasis on theatrical ritual suggests Germany's desire for peace rather than military expansion, which the display of physical strength might imply.

The opening sequence of the film illustrates the glory of a New Germany in harmony with the nations of the world. A series of dissolves visually links Olympic symbols, the heavens, the German Stadium, the flags of the nations, and finally the crowd. This montage suggests that Germany will herald in a triumphant age of both peace and pageantry. Representatives from Sweden, Japan, Italy, and Germany parade around the stadium. The selection of athletes from a neutral country and the Axis powers politicizes the otherwise apolitical ceremony. Dressed all in white, their arms raised in the Nazi salute and preceded by the swastika flag, the Germans athletes resemble soldiers

more than competitors. German uniqueness is cinematically demonstrated by a musical variation of the Olympic fanfare upon the athletes' arrival and by an aerial shot of their marching columns. Since Germany has the largest contingency and the only one framed in an extreme long shot, German superiority is confirmed in visual terms.

The ceremonies end with a ritual that seems to celebrate both war and peace; the stadium is filled with the sound of trumpets, bells, and canons while thousands of doves (resembling airplanes) fill the sky. The film then makes a fluid transition from the Olympic Games to the Polish campaign, thus conflating athletic competition, pageantry, and war. The nationalism, pride in German achievements, love for the Führer, and community spirit associated with the Olympics are mobilized in Borsody's film to solicit support for the war effort.

The characterization of Inge Wagner (Ilse Werner) and Herbert Koch (Carl Raddatz) also serves a didactic purpose. The young lovers stand in for the entire populace and set an example to which the audience should aspire. Their whirlwind romance is portrayed as representative of the exciting and troubled times. Their first encounter at the spectacular Olympic ceremonies is followed by a wedding proposal on their first date, an idyllic sailing trip on the Wannsee, and an abrupt, dramatic parting mandated by political circumstances. When Herbert is suddenly called to service in the Condor Legion and sworn to secrecy, Inge accepts her patriotic duty to endure separation stoically without knowing its purpose. Indeed, she demonstrates her unconditional loyalty by waiting three years for Herbert without hearing from him once. Inge also shows she knows how to "read" the signs of military authority.²⁸ She immediately recognizes that her childhood friend Helmut Winkler has been promoted to the rank of lieutenant by simply looking at his uniform. Inge's knowledge of military rites coupled with her submission to military standards define her as a model officer's wife. Herbert also exhibits conduct becoming a German officer. He exudes strength and discipline and immediately accepts that service must come first. Inge and Herbert assume roles that will become standard for men and women during the war. The woman patiently waits for her man and remains loyal to him, while the man puts his military duty and honor above all personal desires.

War is represented as inseparable from the fate of the young couple and the nation. The personalization of the war experience contributed widely to the film's popularity, but audiences were equally impressed by *Wunschkonzert's* presentation of the contemporary, real-life crisis of war through newsreel footage. Despite its documentary techniques, which create the illusion of reality, *Wunschkonzert* does not portray war in a realistic manner. War is the symbolic victory of man over machine, the mythic display of heroic ideals, or a light-hearted comedy, but never violent aggression against a political enemy. Borsody uses actual newsreel footage of the Condor Legion and the Polish

campaign sparsely but effectively to portray the German armed forces as an invincible fighting machine. Whereas the true-to-life quality of this footage lends the combat sequences an air of reality, the extreme condensation of time and space situates the battle in the realm of the imaginary. The Spanish Civil War, for example, lasts only thirty-seven seconds in cinematic time. A map of Spain is followed by some fifteen shots in rapid succession depicting the Condor Legion in action. Images of a tank smashing down a wall, soldiers running alongside a tank carrying the Spanish flag, and airplanes flying through the sky bombing the mountains from a safe distance are underscored by uplifting march music. The Condor Legion consists of German soldiers discharged from the Wehrmacht and wearing civilian clothing. Defined in image and dialogue as a non-military unit, their victory is all the more sensational. The Condor Legion encounters no resistance. Indeed, there is no enemy in sight, no counterattack, no death; by their sheer presence the Germans seem to win a one-sided battle in a nondescript landscape. War becomes a fictional event despite its staging as documented fact.

The cinematic transition from Spain to Poland, from civil war to the Second World War, is nearly seamless. In a split second German pilots travel across the continent and three years time. After the date "September 6, 1939" flashes across the screen, shots of airplanes dropping bombs alternate with shots taken from within the airplane itself, positioning the spectator alongside the victorious German pilots. Like the Spanish Civil War, the Polish Campaign is condensed into a mere thirty-seven seconds.

With the incorporation of newsreel footage, Borsody adopts several essential properties of contemporary Nazi feature-length campaign films. These films accentuate the speed and mobility of the German army, giving the impression that it is an invulnerable, moving force.²⁹ For example, *Feuertaufe* (1940) and *Sieg im Westen* (1941) employ flash-cutting and numerous aerial shots to depict the Blitzkrieg. "Continual motion," Siegfried Kracauer argues, "works upon the motor nerves, deepening in the spectator the conviction of the Nazis' dynamic power; movement around and above a field implies complete control of that field."³⁰ Borsody uses the same techniques to demonstrate how German military power overcomes geographic and temporal distance effortlessly. In *Wunschkonzert*, the speed with which German "civilians" defeat the anti-fascists in Spain is eclipsed only by the near instantaneousness with which German "soldiers" triumph over Polish "aggressors." With the help of the cinematic apparatus, the military negates space and time. What Kracauer identifies as a lack of geographic specificity in the campaign films applies equally to *Wunschkonzert*, so that "whole battles develop in a never-never land where the Germans rule over time and space."³¹

Wunschkonzert portrays the Western Campaign primarily through dramatizations and only a few shots of newsreel footage. Again, the film does not stage war as violent aggression of one nation against another. War is

instead waged on the symbolic level, specifically in the realm of perception. War and cinema, as Paul Virilio has convincingly argued, share the same structural framework in their common employment of technology to heighten perception. Indeed, “the history of battle is primarily the history of radically changing fields of perception.”³² Accordingly, the dramatic enactment of combat in *Wunschkonzert* can be seen as an attempt to rewrite the history of the First World War by winning a cinematic Second World War. The historical obstacles German soldiers encountered in battle between 1914 and 1918 are now symbolically reenacted and victoriously resolved. War, Virilio argues, “consists not so much in scoring territorial, economic, or other material victories as in appropriating the ‘immateriality’ of perceptual fields.”³³ This immateriality of perception, specifically the ability to see, hear, and move, is secured in *Wunschkonzert* with the aid of technology and the “superior” Aryan body. Rather than actually killing a human adversary, the Germans win symbolic battles in which they conquer a nearly invisible enemy, master detection, and establish presence.

During the First World War, technological advances in weaponry limited hand-to-hand combat. The “invisible” and ever-changing battlefield of aircraft and submarine surveillance stood in stark contrast to the blind, static conflict of trench warfare. Deprived of sight and mobility in the grave-like trenches of the First World War, “the soldier had the feeling of being not so much destroyed as derealized or dematerialized.”³⁴ Borsody’s celluloid Second World War infantrymen transcend the historical obstacles of trench warfare. On a foggy night in France, the German infantrymen now cut through barbed wire, attack the enemy position in the trenches, and return to their base of operations with only one officer wounded and one foot-soldier, a young music student called Schwarzkopf, sacrificed in heroic death. By storming the enemy trenches, the German soldiers triumph over immobility in a military struggle devoid of any visible, physical confrontation; the audience does not see them actually killing the enemy. Equally significant, the soldiers overcome their loss of sight, ostensibly due to the thick fog but symbolically linked to trench fighting, by relying on their superior sense of hearing. They follow the sound of organ music to maneuver around a mine-field and reach the safety of the church. The humiliating military losses in the trenches of the First World War are thus rectified cinematically.

Wunschkonzert highlights the machinery employed in all branches of the armed services to deploy soldiers and transmit information: tanks, airplanes, trains, submarines, cars, telegraph, telephone, radio. The Luftwaffe pilot, however, seems to epitomize the modern warrior best, for he controls the machine, harnesses its dynamic energy, and enjoys the freedom of flight. The pilot also possesses a bird’s-eye view, a privileged vantage point from which he can observe the enemy. If the eye is the ultimate weapon, then the pilot will ensure victory.

Parallel to the infantrymen, who rely on their heightened sense of hearing to complete their mission, the Luftwaffe pilots overcome visual limitations by “appropriating the ‘immateriality’ of perceptual fields” (Virilio). Captain Koch and Lieutenant Winkler are sent on a reconnaissance mission, but like the foot soldiers, they are caught in the fog. Under heavy artillery fire, Koch locates the position of enemy ships with his naked eyes, so that the human body is inscribed into the war machine. His crew radios its sighting to headquarters seconds before Winkler is wounded and the plane is shot down. A German submarine intercepts their distress signal and rescues the crew as the Luftwaffe flies overhead on its way to engage the enemy. Aided by a discerning sense of sight in tandem with superior technology (airplane, submarine, radio), the German armed forces detect the enemy position, transmit the information, and begin an invisible (off-screen) attack.

Borsody focuses considerable attention on the soldiers’ daily life, which is more akin to a camping trip than the regimented and deadly experience of war. Infantrymen march in columns and sing to the approval of the civilian populace as they leave for the front. The heroic Luftwaffe pilots Koch and Winkler find time between missions to lounge on the beach and talk about their girlfriends at home. The submarine crew, when it is not rescuing fighter pilots, gathers together to sing about the sailor’s undying love for the sea. In their barracks the infantrymen shave, clean their weapons, play cards, and drink coffee. But most of all, servicemen from every branch of the military listen to the radio. With its emphasis on a cheerful, harmonious community of men who occupy themselves with mundane, everyday tasks or bask in leisure, *Wunschkonzert* romanticizes military life.

The war even engenders comical situations. The butcher Kramer and the baker Hammer, for instance, find five abandoned French pigs in the countryside but no French soldiers — unless the pigs are a comment on the French enemy. Ordered to deliver the pigs as a donation to the *Wunschkonzert*, the two enlisted men take the train to Berlin, compose a ridiculous song on the way, and appear on the radio program. Kramer and Hammer experience humorous adventures rather than the perils of armed struggle. Their comic exploits are presented with such levity that they trivialize the serious situation and make the war seem harmless.

Grim reality, bloodshed, and destruction are nonexistent in this film. Everyday life on the battlefield, in the trenches, in the submarine, and in the air is generally reduced to the domestic and work activities of peacetime. This mundane image of military service works to relieve the spectator’s anxiety over the concrete dangers of war. It also sustains the myth widely spread in late 1940 that the war would end quickly. After the lightning victories over Poland, Denmark, Norway, Holland, Belgium, and France in 1939 and 1940, the majority of Germans basked in the euphoria of conquest. While there were numerous swings in public opinion and morale during the first

year of war, the swift defeat of France marked a high point of public optimism never again met or surpassed. Notably encouraged by spectacular military successes in a war of movement and the reversal of the Versailles Treaty with France's defeat, the German populace expressed enthusiastic support for Adolf Hitler and his war effort.³⁵

Rather than presenting war in terms of death and loss, *Wunschkonzert* stresses how war allows individuals to develop their inner potential to the fullest. Selected to speak on the *Wunschkonzert* radio program, for example, the shy and retiring baker Hammer becomes a forceful presence. On the home front, the war also provides opportunities for personal growth. Working women, pregnant wives, and grieving mothers all adapt to the necessities of war and seem to benefit from the sacrifices. The butcher's wife, a small and dependent woman, learns to run the business without her husband, while the baker's wife, a large and gruff woman, is able to demonstrate her hidden generosity and gentle spirit. Even the teacher's wife, a young woman in delicate health expecting her first child, seems better off having her baby alone. She expresses relief that her husband will be at the front and too busy to worry about her and the child. The German nuclear family, conceived in Nazi ideology as the bastion of Aryan virtues, is almost nonexistent in *Wunschkonzert*. Because of the military struggle, not one household remains intact. War dictates a new definition of kinship. Rather than extolling the individual family, Nazi war propaganda stressed the need for disparate groups to bind together into a large extended family, the *Volkgemeinschaft*.

Wunschkonzert depicts a war in which only one German soldier dies. The young music student Schwarzkopf sacrifices himself in an aestheticized, meaningful death accompanied by triumphant music on the church grounds. Schwarzkopf and his friend Friedrich are stationed as sentries at a church. From a window high in the choir loft, they look for their comrades who are lost in the thick fog. Schwarzkopf decides to play the church organ so that the soldiers can follow the music back to the church. Ironically, the soldier who does not fire a single shot saves his unit. Schwarzkopf's death is staged with religious iconography that exalts his sacrifice but shifts it from Christian to Nazi martyrdom. His death is set to organ music, a variation on Bach and the Olympic fanfare, which suggests a bridge between Germany's glorious past and the Nazi present. When bombs fall on the church and he becomes aware of his impending death, Schwarzkopf appears to be transfigured. His eyes glaze over and a strange, rapturous smile appears on his face while the fires rage in the background, symbolically consuming him on the sacrificial altar of the Reich. Like a martyr burned at the stake for his beliefs, Schwarzkopf is guaranteed eternal life after death in the mythic pantheon of Nazi heroes. An artistic soul whose life was devoted to his mother and his music, Schwarzkopf leaves behind no wife and no child. Because he neither furthers the race nor complies with the warrior image, his death is acceptable

by fascist standards. Present at his death, however, is his friend, the school-teacher Friedrich, who has just become the father of a baby boy. Thus, death and birth are portrayed as complementary. When one man dies another takes his place so that the folk and the cycle of national life can continue in the male line. After Schwarzkopf's death, combat is over and entertainment takes precedence; the remainder of the film deals with the *Wunschkonzert* radio show and the resolution of the love story. The theater of operations is effectively replaced by musical theater.

In the Third Reich, radio technology allowed the regime to transmit to the entire nation simultaneously and orchestrate a common cultural experience for the masses. The Nazis were determined to tap into the nation's pride in a shared musical heritage and forge a collective national identity that would combine tradition with innovation. Well before it assumed power in 1933, the Nazi Party attempted to use cultural heroes like Ludwig van Beethoven to legitimize its political agenda. Beethoven was promoted as an artist who, like Adolf Hitler, embodied National Socialist heroic ideals. Music scholars drew explicit parallels between Beethoven and Hitler, emphasizing their artistry, patriotism, and leadership qualities. Critics portrayed Beethoven as not just a great composer but also a legendary spiritual leader who could unify the folk with his powerful art. The Nazis appropriated Beethoven's music for party rituals and sponsored concerts, festivals, and radio programs like the internationally renowned "Beethoven Cycle" broadcast in January 1934 on the *Deutschlandsender*, the national broadcasting station. By banning so-called degenerate music (jazz, swing, atonal music, and music by Jews, Negroes, and Bolsheviks) and cultivating "pure" German music by composers like Beethoven, Mozart, and Wagner, the Party could fashion itself as the legitimate heir, if not the savior, of Germany's rich cultural legacy. The alignment of National Socialism with German high culture was seen as an effective way to appeal to middle-class tastes and assure the educated burgher that the regime (and later the war) would not interfere with familiar leisure activities.³⁶

This alignment of Beethoven and the Nazi war effort is given vivid expression in the film *Wunschkonzert*. Family and friends gather together in a neighbor's living room to listen to the young music student Schwarzkopf play Beethoven's *Pathétique* on the piano. In the movie, Beethoven's music acts as a social equalizer and creates a forum where all classes can freely mingle. Representatives from the educated bourgeoisie, petit bourgeoisie, and the artist class, each dressed in Wehrmacht uniform, find common ground in their shared cultural heritage and new military identity. Beethoven's music, like the war, allows this disparate group to come together in a common cause.

The connection between maintaining German cultural achievements and armed struggle is made apparent by the way this scene merges with the next. Beethoven's sonata is suddenly taken over by a soldier's marching song while

the camera cuts to a shot from outside the apartment and pans over to columns of marching infantrymen. The nearly seamless transition of music and camera work establishes a bridge spanning the gulf between high and low art, classical and folk traditions, the intimate realm of neighbors and the wider social framework of nation. The fluidity of these scenes suggests that war is necessary to protect German culture. Indeed, the episode illustrates cinematically Goebbels's earlier declaration on why the nation was forced to fight, "We Germans are defending in this war against the hostile plutocratic powers not only our living space, our daily bread, and our machines, we are also defending our German culture."³⁷

The "Request Concert" radio program staged in this motion picture plainly links war with the cultural industry. The show consists of ten performances ranging from classical to pop music and from comedy sketches to solemn tributes. Crowd pleasers include the Berlin Philharmonic performing the overture to Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro* and movie star Marika Rökk singing the hit song from her 1938 film *Eine Nacht in Mai*. Each performance functions like a microcosm of Nazi cultural policy and effective war propaganda since it provides a strategy on how to deal with the real-life hardships and emotional problems triggered by war.

In two numbers, a sense of humor is shown to be an important tactic for coping with war-related stress. First, Bavarian comedian Weiß-Ferdl sings a lighthearted salute to the anti-intellectualism so widely promoted by the Nazi regime: "I'm so happy I'm no intellectual, no enlightened fellow, no know-it-all, not quite a bright light! . . . Where you're better off not too educated, being a little bit dumb has often stood the test." Weiß-Ferdl also jokes about food rationing and regional differences, claiming Berlin can keep the "Request Concert" if Munich gets more butter. In another comic sketch, actors Heinz Rühmann, Josef Sieber, and Hans Brausewetter, known to contemporary audiences as the bachelor trio from the popular 1939 *Paradies der Junggesellen* (Bachelors' Paradise), sing the film's hit song "Can't Shake a Seaman." This song, reportedly the one most often requested by soldiers, relates to the fear of emotional involvement, but the sentiment can just as easily apply to the war: "And if the whole earth quakes, and the world becomes unhinged, that can't shake a seaman. No fear, no fear, Rosemarie! Ahoy!" By making fun of fear and turmoil, the song reassures the audience that everything will be okay.

Just as one needs an outlet for daily frustrations, one must also learn how to deal with such highly emotional events as birth and death suddenly decontextualized by war-related separation. The radio program offers the necessary support by reconstituting a sense of family and community with their familiar rituals. Instead of traditional Christian ceremonies like baptism and funeral rites, the Nazi cultural industry offers musical celebration and commemoration on the radio. For example, front-line soldiers first learn of their child's birth from radio announcer Heinz

Goedecke, who records the father's name and encourages the assembled audience to share in the joy of these separated families. While a children's choir sings the lullaby "Fall Asleep, My Little Prince," the camera cuts to a grandmother in an armchair reading to a little boy and girl, to an elderly woman adorned with the Mother's Cross sewing at the radio, to soldier Friedrich who learns he is the father of a baby boy, to his radiant wife holding the child, and finally to a tableau of soldiers who add their deep voices to establish the nuclear family acoustically. It is only with the aid of radio and cinema that the German family can remain intact. This montage sequence illustrates particularly well how National Socialism embraced modern technology while propagating the myth of the organic community.³⁸ In a similar manner, a soldier's death is memorialized in song, allowing the radio audience to mourn collectively in a performance that is simultaneously entertainment and sentimental ritual. The young music student Schwarzkopf, who heroically offered his life to save his regiment, represents a generation of fallen soldiers. His mother requests her son's favorite song, "Good Night, Mother." While the bittersweet song is played, the camera pans over Schwarzkopf's piano, his photograph, and a bust of Beethoven to the mother dressed in black at her usual place at the window. With her stoic grief and ability to share her loss with the community, Mrs. Schwarzkopf shows the nation how to cope with death. The performance sublimates the loss of a young man's life to the level of art (or kitsch).³⁹

Wunschkonzert ends with a celebration of German strength and unity. The final sequence, edited out of most releases after 1945, begins in the broadcasting studios of the *Wunschkonzert* radio program. The on-screen audience demonstrates its support for the war effort when it spontaneously breaks into the song "Wir fahren gegen Engelland." The voices of the united home front flow into the next scene, a montage of airplanes, artillery launchers, speedboats, torpedo launchers, and battle ships. The flash-cut editing establishes German military speed, dominance, and omnipresence. A close-up of the billowing imperial war flag, the symbolic heir to the Olympic flag, closes the film and brings it full circle both structurally and thematically. This concluding montage, like the opening one, promotes a sense of belonging to a victorious nation fighting to maintain the newly gained pagantry, nationalism, and love for the Führer.

With its documentary footage and portrayal of current events, Borsody's film implicitly promises an authentic rendition of the war experience. What it delivers instead is an alternate reality, one in which war provides for every human need. *Wunschkonzert* fulfills the audience's request for war to entertain, instruct, grant an emotional release, and rectify history. Like all successful Nazi feature films, *Wunschkonzert* engages in a discourse of desire. It caters to the audience's emotional needs by integrating troubling aspects of everyday life into the more palatable reality of cinematic experience. For the

duration of the film and its recasting in the mind's eye, one can imagine war as harmless or even beneficial to the national community.



Performing for soldiers on the Western Front: *Die große Liebe*.

The Spectacle of War: *Die große Liebe* (1942)

In the spring of 1942, the British government implemented a new military strategy of bombing civilian targets, especially working-class neighborhoods, hoping that it could destroy morale on the German home front. Shortly after midnight on May 31, 1942, the British Royal Air Force launched its first One Thousand Bomber Raid (code named “Millennium”) with Cologne its target. Within an hour and a half the RAF dropped nearly half a million incendiaries on the city center. The fireball was visible from over one hundred miles away. Upon reaching the devastated city, one British pilot remarked, “It was suddenly silent on board. If what we were seeing was true, then Cologne had to have been destroyed. We looked at the Rhine, but it was no mistake: what we saw down there was reality.”⁴⁰

Less than two weeks after that bombing raid, on June 12, 1942, Rolf Hansen’s home-front film *Die große Liebe* (True Love) premiered at Berlin’s largest cinema, the Ufa-Palast am Zoo, and quickly became the most popular film of the year. In the first ten months of its release, *Die große Liebe* earned

8 million RM playing to an audience of some 27.2 million spectators.⁴¹ The film's touching love story, sensational musical numbers, measured comic relief, and star-studded cast all contributed to its overwhelming popularity. The trade papers, however, praised *Die große Liebe* primarily for its timely subject and realism.⁴² What kind of realism did the film offer the masses, especially in the weeks and months following the premiere and massive, persistent bombing raids? What drove audiences in the summer of 1942 to this love story about a revue singer and a Luftwaffe pilot repeatedly separated by the fighting in North Africa, France, and the Soviet Union?

I suggest we take our cue from the Nazi trade papers and examine the way in which this home-front film constructs the reality of war. The vast majority of German feature films made between 1939 and 1945 were set in either a distant, heroic past or a nondescript, seemingly peaceful present. *Die große Liebe*, a striking exception to this pattern, centers on daily life during the Second World War. With its contemporary setting, the film offered audiences a unique opportunity to identify and empathize with characters trying to balance the conflicting wartime demands of love and duty. *Die große Liebe* develops an entertaining and emotionally gripping model for dealing with air raids, rationing, separation, and suppression of desire for the sake of military victory. The film links the conflicts in the homeland and on the battlefield through highly sentimental episodes to illustrate how the nation forms a united front against the enemy. Hansen renders his fictional world with enough authentic details for the audience to see not just familiar characters and situations but also to see themselves in the events unfolding onscreen. Since the main characters are repeatedly depicted as spectators and performers, they hold up a mirror to moviegoers to look at themselves and imagine their own participation in the nation's real-life drama. By drawing structural parallels between musical and military spectacles, the film presents theater as a metaphor for the participatory role war demands of soldier and civilian alike.

Die große Liebe fashions reality so that war functions as a dominant and positive force in the lives of Hanna Holberg (Zarah Leander) and Paul Wendlandt (Viktor Staal). War works as a catalyst for the love story. Paul's battle report brings him to Berlin, while his knowledge of an imminent bombing raid allows him to gain access to Hanna's kitchen, cellar, and eventually her bedroom.⁴³ As the air raid warden comments about their budding love, "The siren will bring it to the light of day."⁴⁴

For the soldier who knows nothing about blackouts and the singer who is not shaken by them, war changes ordinary experiences into a reality more beautiful than a fairy tale. As they look out over the darkened city in anticipation of a bombing raid, Paul and Hanna discuss how wartime reality, despite its dangers (or maybe because of its dangers) makes the city beautiful. When Hanna mentions that the city looks like a fairy tale, Paul disagrees, saying the city is "even more beautiful. Like reality."⁴⁵

The dangers inherent in war give the everyday a dynamic quality that is both new and exciting. In this highly charged atmosphere of life and death, intense passion and true love can evolve. Despite the characters' disavowal of contemporary life as a fairy tale, the narrative continuously associates war with an imaginary kingdom where wishes come true. The film concludes with a song whose opening lyrics confirm the bond between war and fairy tales. Hanna sings: "I know, once upon a time a miracle will come to pass and then a thousand fairy tales will come true."⁴⁶ The song removes "once upon a time," the formulaic introduction of fairy tales, from the remote, make-believe past and situates it in a not too distant Nazi future as suggested by the lyrics "once upon a time it will come to pass." The film links the wish for a miraculous victory to an equally strong wish for a romantic happy ending, so that the former seems to be the only guarantee for the latter.

The battle between love and duty, rather than between Germany and the Allied nations, becomes the principal conflict of the film and, by extension, the times. With war so thoroughly intertwined with the love story, military victory seems predicated on whether or not the pilot and his girl can work out their problems.⁴⁷ Because the songs refer ambiguously to developments on the battlefield as well as in the love affair, they reinforce this idea. In the number "It's Not the End of the World," for example, Hanna sings of overcoming emotional heartaches to a hall filled with injured soldiers. While her song ostensibly deals with the ups and downs lovers suffer because of wartime separation, it could just as easily apply to the vicissitudes of combat. Hanna's lyrics, her gestures, and the soldiers' reactions aptly illustrate this ambiguity. She sings "sometimes things are up and sometimes down," while her hands mimic diving airplanes and the assembled Wehrmacht troops link arms to join in the rhythmic movements.⁴⁸ Whether a reference to war or to love, the song provides an outlet for frustration and generates an optimistic sense of camaraderie.⁴⁹

The film addresses many of the emotional problems created by war, specifically how people waver between hope and desperation, deal with feelings of abandonment, endure loneliness, and successfully adapt to a curtailed domestic life. The main characters, who serve as models, anchor these psychological issues. Nazi film critics and officials maintained that feature films inherently encouraged viewers to identify with sympathetic characters and emulate their behavior. In his 1943 book *Betrachtungen zum Filmschaffen* (Considerations on Film Making), Reich Film Dramaturge Fritz Hippler asserted that if a film gratified viewers' emotional needs, it could also supply influential role models and an orientation in life. Hippler summarized how film could potentially define values and teach behavior:

Besides the personal connection between the audience and the main character during the course of the movie, film also generates the ambition to be like the star. How he clears his throat and how he spits, how

he is dressed, how he behaves, if and what he drinks, what and how he smokes, whether he is a stuffed shirt or a man-about-town, that all has an effect not only in the film but also in the life of the audience. A powerful and victorious film releases a different public than a tragic or comic film. After an Albers film, an assistant barber is an Albers; nobody had better dare to get mixed up with him.⁵⁰

Film critics in Nazi Germany praised home-front films like *Die große Liebe* because they evoked in viewers “an inner willingness to lose themselves completely and totally in the figures and the events surrounding them.” They deemed the effect of these role models as substantial, “because everyone in the audience, whether soldier or civilian, man or woman, has someone ‘present’ and identifies the fate up on the screen with that of a friend, husband, brother or fiancée. In short, after the first images, every member of the audience sits in the auditorium with a trusting, open heart.”⁵¹

Considering the significance attached to the characters, it is no surprise that Hansen chose Zarah Leander and Viktor Staal to play Hanna Holberg and Paul Wendlandt. Best known for her imposing stature, flaming red hair, and legendary contralto, Zarah Leander was by all accounts the diva of Nazi cinema. Directors most often cast the Swedish actress in melodramas where she played seemingly independent, sensual women who suffer unbearable anguish before being redeemed as proper and obedient wives. *Die große Liebe* capitalizes on Zarah Leander’s star image to frame the character’s education in appropriate wartime behavior within familiar and entertaining melodramatic conventions. As in nearly all her German films, Leander’s character is a sensual entertainer who undergoes the painful process of being tamed by a man and disciplined for marriage. What distinguishes her role in this film is that her training directly relates to the contemporary military struggle. Hanna must learn what it takes to be an officer’s wife: wait patiently and accept separation without question. She develops from a self-centered prima donna reluctant to sacrifice her own immediate gratification into a selfless wife/comrade committed to victory. Although she initially asserts “treat yourself to whatever you like” (*erlaubt ist, was gefällt*), she eventually comes to accept that separation is part of everyday life, each moment together is precious, and the postponement of pleasure serves a higher goal.

Although Viktor Staal did not possess the same star recognition as Leander, he had already established a solid reputation as a romantic leading man. Starring opposite such popular actresses as Leander in *Zu neuen Ufern* (1937, Sierck), Lilian Harvey in *Capriccio* (1938, Ritter), and Marika Rökk in *Eine Nacht in Mai* (1938, Jacoby), Staal specialized in roles of handsome and likeable (if somewhat wooden) bachelors who marry exciting, unpredictable women. Typecast as the strong and dependable suitor, Staal brings these qualities to his portrayal of Paul Wendlandt. A dedicated soldier, Paul must discover

the value of attachment to a woman and the homeland. Whereas he starts as a daredevil without any emotional ties, he learns that a soldier needs someone special at home waiting just for him. Paul only recognizes how important love is for a man after he assumes the traditionally female role of waiting during war.⁵² When Paul tries to visit Hanna unexpectedly, he discovers that she is entertaining the troops in France. Disappointed, he experiences first hand what it is like to wait for a loved one to return from the front. But one aspect of Paul's personality remains constant: he is an officer devoted to the strictest military code of honor. What we hear about Paul in the opening scene characterizes him throughout: "He won't leave his machine in the lurch."⁵³

Like all melodramas, *Die große Liebe* needs to place obstacles in the path of the romantic leads to give the characters something to grow around and reach past. One serious obstacle to Paul and Hanna's romance is their different, yet equally valid understandings of *Glück* (luck). Paul thinks of luck as fortune. During the film, he repeats five times that he has "proverbial good luck" (ein sprichwörtliches Glück). Luck allows him to win Hanna's heart, succeed at games, avoid serious injury, and triumph over the enemy. Hanna, by contrast, talks about luck in terms of happiness. She pictures herself living contentedly with Paul in a cottage, gardening and washing diapers. Ultimately Hanna begins to recognize that personal happiness and the fortunes of war go hand in hand. She eventually develops a realistic attitude and accepts that an ideal married life must wait until after the war. In her final musical performance, Hanna acknowledges their common fate: "We both have the same star, and your fate is mine too."⁵⁴

To reinforce the message, *Die große Liebe* mirrors the central plot in two romantic subplots. The first subplot, with Käthe and Albert, mirrors Hanna's search for an ideal relationship with Paul. By rendering the same story with minor characters in the tradition of the *Ständeklausel* (dramatic convention of social rank), the film ridicules unrealistic expectations for personal happiness and takes a humorous look at the ideal man. Käthe fools herself into thinking that the physically powerful acrobat Albert loves her. Only after she finds the ordinary soldier, Maxe, can Käthe have a realistic relationship and even find true love. Käthe, like Hanna, prefers a man who acts not on stage but in an arena that actually counts — the battlefield. In Käthe's words: "I'd rather have my Max in hand than Albert on the trapeze."⁵⁵

The second subplot deals with Alexander's unsuccessful courtship of Hanna, which helps define the nature of a real man. "Hopeless but cheerful" (hoffnungslos aber heiter), Alexander serves more as a foil to Paul than as a viable suitor for Hanna. As the sensitive musician, Alexander's inability to be forceful and his tendency to be too nice make him both a comic and a tragic character. Both Alexander and Albert fall short of ideal masculinity. At one extreme stands Albert, seemingly desirable as the strong and silent type, but whose shyness and indecisiveness make him laughable. At the other extreme

sits Alexander, an artistic type who is equally inappropriate because he is weak and overly sentimental. Paul forms the middle ground, a man who possesses the right mixture of strength, determination, and feeling. A fighter pilot with equal amounts of discipline and sentiment, Paul embodies the virtues Goebbels so often described as “romanticism tempered by steel.”

In its presentation of the *Volksgemeinschaft* (national community) gathered together in the cellar during an air raid, the film also works out real-life tensions created by war. Elements of reality enter the scene through stereotypes: the high-strung, screeching old woman; the overzealously organized family patriarch; the humorless, intellectual complainer; and the hoarder who is generous with other people’s property. Each stereotype represents a genuine problem on the home front: fear of bodily harm and death, need for a contingency plan in emergencies, and resentment of hardships, especially rationing. By poking fun at problems in a lighthearted manner, the film shows them to be either unfounded or easily remedied. A cup of real coffee and a good dose of humor seem enough to distract the home front from carpet-bombings and the conflicts of world war.

The images of a community spending an evening together, playing games, knitting, and chatting portray a sanitized version of life in the midst of Allied aerial strikes. The cellar with its comfortable furniture and friendly atmosphere looks more like a neighborhood social club than a bomb shelter. The film depicts shortages in consumer goods as minor inconveniences, which ultimately teach people to share with the community and forge a cooperative spirit. In contrast to this rather harmless depiction of civilian life, the situation on the German home front in 1942 was serious.⁵⁶ According to secret surveillance reports compiled by the *Sicherheitsdienst* (Security Service), food shortages in June 1942 were so severe that many workers complained of “a continuous feeling of hunger.” The authorities voiced continued concern over the worsening food situation because “the atmosphere and attitude of the population is still determined by the difficulty in the food sector.”⁵⁷

Despite the discrepancy between the film’s depiction of hardships and the state’s assessment of them, especially in regard to the severity of the situation, *Die große Liebe* seems to have given audiences a reality compatible with their own. The cellar scene, for example, highlights everyday experiences of adversity, to which many viewers could relate. Moreover, the film offers a remedy by suggesting that humor can be an effective outlet for normal frustrations. When a character loses his sense of humor in the face of minor inconveniences, his attitude is depicted as inappropriate and somehow tied to more deeply rooted personal problems. For example, when Alexander yells at a waiter because he and Hanna cannot get dessert in a restaurant, his anger is plainly an overreaction to the situation. Alexander merely uses the food shortage as an excuse to vent his frustration; the underlying reason for his outburst is the news that Hanna loves another man. Just as the film associates passion with danger to illustrate the

inherent connection between love and war, it also associates the frustrations of unrequited love with wartime food shortages to make the same connection.⁵⁸

By constantly presenting contemporary hardships within the framework of the love story, the film obscures any direct correlation between war and bombing raids or food shortages. Wartime dangers and inconveniences, divorced from any geopolitical conflicts, function as catalysts for the love story or as signifiers of romantic intentions. While the film acknowledges wartime problems, it generally frames them as harmless in the short run and even beneficial in the long run. For example, the Allied bombing raid causes no apparent damage, but it allows Hanna to get to know Paul better. Furthermore, although a Soviet pilot shoots down Paul's plane, his minor injury gives him the opportunity to marry Hanna and enjoy a three-week honeymoon.

Die große Liebe provides a good example of how the home-front film forged the bonds between civilian and serviceman. Home-front films stressed the need for all members of the community to unite behind the soldiers and spoke to one of the more haunting myths of the First World War, namely that the German troops were stabbed in the back by the homeland.⁵⁹ *Die große Liebe* establishes this crucial link between the armed forces and the folk on the level of performance and spectatorship, uniting individuals through entertainment into a collective act that ultimately supports the war effort. Uniformed soldiers appear alternately as heroes performing a real-life display of martial skills for a captivated audience and as spectators attending an equally stimulating musical variety show. In a similar manner, the film depicts stage performers both as actors entertaining soldiers and as spectators mesmerized by newsreel footage of battle scenes. Since the characters and the scenes share the same properties, the film establishes a nexus whereby war and theater are structurally related. At four moments in particular, the spectacle of the theater merges with the spectacle of war.

The opening sequence blurs the distinction between reality, fiction, and documentary. Set in the skies over North Africa in 1941, familiar elements from contemporary wartime newsreels such as pulsating martial music, flash editing, and aerial shots of Stukas in flight fill the sequence. Into this newsreel-quality footage, the director Hansen intersperses the fictional story of Luftwaffe pilot Paul Wendlandt who is unable to engage his landing gear. The use of newsreel conventions heightens the drama of Paul's crash landing, giving the fiction an aura of reality. Because the opening sequence so obviously quotes a familiar newsreel style, it also draws attention to its own construction as a motion picture. This self-reflective narrative creates a decisive link between war and spectacle. Although the film renders Paul's crash landing as a real-life military action, it is also a visual sensation witnessed by onscreen viewers. The scene is presented in the same terms as theater, with Paul as an actor on display and his squadron as an onscreen audience who

watches the scene intently but from afar. Watching the war thus resembles watching a cinematic or theatrical spectacle.

The second moment comes as Paul's real-life aerial show segues into Hanna's musical extravaganza, where she performs on stage as the object of desire, singing of unbridled passion to servicemen who need to renew themselves emotionally before returning to the front. Not only do structural similarities and visual thrills connect Paul and Hanna's shows, but so does the presence of an onscreen military audience. Paul and his friend Etzdorf, both dressed in Luftwaffe uniform, are prominently pictured as members of the audience watching Hanna's show "My Life for Love." A swift tracking shot from the back of the theater to the stage establishes the conventional distance between audience and actor, while numerous close-ups of Hanna and reaction shots of Paul work to redefine the theatrical relationship. The intimate camera work illustrates how emotional involvement can bridge the gap between viewer and actor, soldier and singer, war and entertainment.

The third time we encounter the theater of war, the roles are reversed. Unexpectedly, shots of a dogfight fill the screen, accompanied by the sounds of diving Stukas and dramatic, upbeat music. It appears as if we are watching a newsreel woven directly into the feature film when an announcer reports that Luftwaffe pilots continue to engage the British in a dramatic air battle. Suddenly the camera tracks backward to reveal a movie screen, theater, and audience including Hanna. War is rendered as cinema so that Hanna can watch it in the *Wochenschau* (weekly newsreel). The air show unfolding on the screen for Hanna resembles her own performance. Now she is the embedded spectator entranced by the sights and sounds of the Stukas, filled with desire for her fighter pilot conjured up in the newsreel. The military replicates the entertainment Hanna offered the soldiers so that she can enjoy the captivating pleasures of war.

Finally, Hanna becomes a bridge between war and spectacle when she entertains the troops on the Western front. Like the radio in *Wunschkonzert*, Hanna overcomes the distance between homeland and front by bringing her musical performance to the soldiers. Whereas she moved Paul emotionally and sexually in her first performance, she now literally moves the servicemen to sway in response to her song, "Davon geht die Welt nicht unter." Both performances send the same message: women are essential to the war effort because they motivate men into action. As long as women fight in concert with men, victory is inevitable. Hansen uses Hanna's participation in a cultural event organized by the *Sonderreferat Truppenbetreuung* (the Propaganda Ministry's special unit for troop entertainment) to help fulfill the state's mission of uniting war and art. As Hans Hinkel, the director of troop entertainment, remarked: "The connection between sword and lyre — as has been validated in troop entertainment for our soldiers — represents the most glorious symbol of German victory over the outdated plutocratic world

hostile to us.”⁶⁰ Maintaining the link between war and theater is portrayed as crucial to military victory and survival. For example, only after Paul and Hanna break up, after they sever the ties between home and war fronts, do the Soviets shoot down Paul’s plane. The deadly consequences of autonomy are also apparent when the film cuts to Hanna walking along the Via Appia, where she contemplates the beauty of death and confesses: “Sometimes I too wish I were dead.”⁶¹ The symbiosis between Paul and Hanna demands that she understand what it is like to be surrounded by death and experience its fatal attraction so she can accept its seductive power.

When Paul and Hanna finally meet in the mountain hospital and look together toward the planes flying by, they are united in their role as spectators and in their dedication to the war effort. Again the film structures the scene to have an onscreen military audience. Two servicemen watch Hanna’s arrival, nod to each other, and retreat. The camera takes over the servicemen’s point of view and allows the film audience to watch the lovers watching the war. The self-reflective narrative provides a point of identification for the film’s actual audience, allowing the viewer to participate in the love affair, entertainment, and war.⁶²

Self-reflective moments in *Die große Liebe* do not call the film’s ontological status or social reality into question. Instead, questions are directed towards the identity of the main characters who masquerade in illusory roles and must find their true selves. At the outset Paul and Hanna confuse the notions of “role” and “self” in respect to both their own identity and the identity of the other. In her first stage appearance, which is also her first appearance onscreen, Hanna plays the role of *femme fatale*. Costumed in a revealing gown and blond wig, she acts the part of an alluring, frivolous woman. Paul mistakes Hanna for her stage role, pursuing her relentlessly half the night. Only after the two share the role of parents in the bomb shelter does Paul see Hanna’s hidden potential as a wife and mother.⁶³ Through the narrative, Hanna travels toward her authentic self, an officer’s wife who subordinates her desire (read individuality) to the nation’s wartime needs. National Socialism valorized a woman’s sublimation of her own interests for the sake of her family and the national family, the *Volksgemeinschaft*. The prevailing view in the Third Reich held that women could only achieve the status of human beings when they accepted the role of motherhood as the genuine self and ceased to exist as an individual:

If she is a real mother, she loses herself in her familial duties. But wonderfully: exactly therein, she becomes a woman and human being in the deepest sense. The more obvious her surrender, the more so. In losing her life she finds herself, her true dignity, her inherent humanity. . . . She becomes a mother and thus a whole human being by means of self-abnegation, not by self-assertion.⁶⁴

Reduced to her function as potential mother and deprived of desire and even identity through self-denial, the individual woman vanishes. *Die große Liebe* illustrates this process of self-abnegation in the Via Appia scene, which ruptures the nearly seamless narrative fabric. Hanna walks as if in a trance along the deserted road in a landscape she calls “so endlessly cheerful despite the many gravestones” (so unendlich heiter trotz der vielen Grabdenkmäler). Her comfort among the graves and her desperate wish to be dead signal her symbolic death, one in which her ego and subjective desires perish. Only after purging herself of all vestiges of individuality does Hanna become reconciled with Paul and worthy of marriage.

Paul also masquerades when he adopts the persona of an adventurous and ardent man about town. Before he meets Hanna, Paul changes out of his military uniform into civilian clothing, disguising his true soldierly self. Paul’s protective behavior in the bomb shelter, his concern for the community’s well-being, and his ability to distract them from the bombs by organizing a group activity all reveal his potential role as father. Despite these demonstrated masculine qualities, Paul’s identity is still unresolved. When Hanna asks him twice who he is, Paul only gives his name and describes himself in mysterious terms as a prophet and a traveler. Weeks later, when she reads his letters from the front, she finally learns his true identity as a Luftwaffe pilot. Still, she does not confirm his identity out loud. She merely says to him, “You are” (du bist), as if to imply that Paul’s profession is so integral to his being that he simply “is.”

The constant references in *Die große Liebe* to adopting roles, going to the theater and the movies, performing for others, and acting as spectators accentuate the pleasures inherent in the communal ritualized act of moviegoing. *Die große Liebe* creates an emotionally fulfilling experience of communion with others not only in the fictional narrative but also through the ritual of moviegoing itself. Both the fictional and the actual audience can enjoy the collective experience of being transported to a different time and space, a place where magic and make-believe govern the course of events. Günter Berghaus argues that fascist regimes throughout Europe “sought to translate their political creeds into theatrical language that drew heavily on the traditions of ritual and mysticism” to create a belief in the charismatic national community. Berghaus maintains that fascist theater, “like all ritual theatre, had the function of offering a healing power, or *katharsis*, in a moment of crisis and to communicate a binding belief system to the participants.”⁶⁵ In the crisis of war, *Die große Liebe* offered the home and war fronts a group identity based on a shared emotional release, intimacy, physical closeness, and consumption of entertainment. It also provided a fictional model of viewers united in their consumption of entertainment and participation in war.

But the theater in *Die große Liebe* does not function merely as an escapist illusion or as a means to forge a collective identity. It also becomes a way to

control the masses. Since war is defined in terms of participatory theater, civilians and soldiers alike become actors on display, constantly exposed to the policing gaze of their fellow actors. Confined in a perfect spectacle or panopticon as both actor and spectator, the individual is under constant surveillance with the implicit warning to behave. In his celebrated discussion of Bentham's panopticon, Michel Foucault writes, "visibility is a trap" and concludes:

He who is subjected to a field of visibility, and who knows it, assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribes in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he becomes the principle of his own subjection.⁶⁶

Die große Liebe presents this system of constant surveillance as a desirable condition. For instance, as an entertainer Hanna is constantly watched on stage. However, when she leaves the theater, she continues to be the object of the omnipresent gaze. The streetcar conductor observes her movements every night and reports on them to a group of men who continuously stare at her. Although Hanna seems mildly irritated by this scrutiny, it ultimately proves to be beneficial because it allows her love affair with Paul to develop. Only after Paul receives information from the conductor can he follow Hanna into the subway and find a way into her heart.

In a nation permeated by a state-sponsored surveillance apparatus, in a "terrifying social landscape . . . in which ordinary people eagerly helped to police one another," it is fitting that fantasies of an omnipresent gaze would penetrate the cinema.⁶⁷ As recent historical studies have demonstrated, the enthusiastic participation of ordinary citizens and not merely the watchful eye of Gestapo officials "kept the machinery of terror going and constituted a central component of the internal 'constitution' of the Third Reich."⁶⁸

Die große Liebe contributes to the Nazi cinema of enchantment, creating a place so delightful one wants to share in the illusion at any price. Seen through the prism of cinema, constant surveillance of the civilian populace guarantees personal happiness. More importantly, total war becomes thinkable, tolerable, doable, when one keeps in mind that the world won't come to an end and perhaps a miracle will make fairy tales come true.

The Dance of Death: *Die Degenhardts* (1944)

By the summer of 1944, the Propaganda Ministry could hardly expect the home-front film to distract the audience from the fighting so close at hand. The German military situation was grim. The British-American forces had invaded the continent on D-Day, June 6, and were pushing eastward. On June 22, the Soviets successfully launched their summer campaign and were pushing westward with great speed. German cities were being reduced to ashes and

ruddle through continuous Allied aerial bombardment. Since civilians were forced to bear more and more hardships, Goebbels tried to boost morale with escapist fare. Of the sixty-two feature films that premiered in Germany in 1944, there were thirty-three comedies, eighteen dramas, six action adventures, and only five propaganda films.⁶⁹ Considering the general trend toward light distraction at this stage in the war, why did Werner Klingler's melancholy home-front film *Die Degenhardts* premiere in Lübeck on July 6, 1944?⁷⁰

Die Degenhardts attempts not only to trigger anti-British sentiment by portraying Allied bombing strikes against German cultural monuments; it also tries to prepare the German people to cope with mass destruction and death.⁷¹ This home-front film resonates with the pending doom perceived by the German populace at large. After the crushing defeat at Stalingrad and Goebbels's infamous call for total war, death is presented as a natural phenomenon. The war is no longer fought for individuals or the assurance of personal happiness but for the protection of future generations and German culture. The devastating bombing raids only alluded to in *Die große Liebe* become a palpable reality in *Die Degenhardts*. The city center is destroyed; the home front becomes the battlefield and soldiers are rendered as fleeting images in the collective memory. Emphasis is placed on rebuilding architectural milestones, preserving German classical music, and safeguarding the life of the Degenhardts's grandson.



Upholding cultural traditions: *Die Degenhardts*.

Klingler's film tells the story of an ordinary man's ambition, disappointment, and final triumph. On his sixty-fifth birthday, Karl Degenhardt (played by Heinrich George) receives a telegram from the mayor and believes he is to be promoted to Supervisor of City Parks. When he is given retirement instead, Degenhardt does not have the heart to tell his family. He pretends to go to work every day, but the truth is quickly revealed. After war breaks out and his hometown of Lübeck is bombed, Father Degenhardt volunteers for civil duty and is finally given the title he longed for: Supervisor.

German high culture plays a decisive role in the identity of the homeland, and the Degenhardt family nurtures this heritage in their daily lives. On their Sunday walk around town they admire the beauty of German architecture, represented by the Hanseatic Gothic brick houses, the city hall, the Holsten Gate, and St. Mary's Church. Their appreciation of German landscape is equally important. Father Degenhardt has a profound connection to the German soil; as a city official he is responsible for the planting and maintenance of city gardens and parks. In his free time, he tends his own private garden and potted plants or sends flowers to his loved ones.⁷²

The Degenhardt men keep Germany's musical traditions alive with their evening concert performances. Neither mother nor daughter plays an instrument. Christine's only contribution is to turn the pages for her brother, while her mother provides the necessary audience. Son Jochen is an organ builder, pianist, and composer, who devotes himself completely to Germany's rich musical legacy. Like the past masters Dietrich Buxtehude and Johann Sebastian Bach, Jochen plays the magnificent organ in Lübeck's St. Mary's Church and maintains the continuity of German cultural life.

Finally, this middle class, nuclear family with five children (a rarity in Nazi cinema) seems intent on preserving a familiar domestic routine and social cohesion: the weekend family walks, music evenings, small circle of friends, solid bourgeois home, and sacrosanct patriarchal authority all contribute to communal stability and security.

Similar to *Wunschkonzert* and *Die große Liebe*, *Die Degenhardts* presents war as a national solution to personal problems. The conditions created by war allow for the fulfillment of individual desires and the resolution of domestic conflicts. As a price for the bounties of war, the individual must learn to deal with disappointment and accept duty stoically. Based on the example of the Degenhardt family, it becomes evident that every citizen needs to work for victory and pitch in for one another.

This home-front film also shows the audience how to cope with the omnipresence of death. Well before the war begins, Father Degenhardt contemplates the inevitability of dying and assures his family that death is a normal stage in the circle of life. The Degenhardt family is fascinated with the famous Lübeck *Totentanz* (Dance of Death), painted by Bernt Notke in 1463 for the Confessional Chapel in St. Mary's Church and destroyed in the Allied

bombing raid on March 28, 1942.⁷³ Through its placement in the Confessional Chapel, its detailed depiction of the local cityscape, and its explicit references to typical Hanseatic civic figures and tradesmen, the Lübeck *Totentanz* invites the native observer into the narrative through personalization. One is compelled to envision oneself dancing with Death while reflecting upon one's own mortality and the Last Judgment.

The *Totentanz* functions in *Die Degenhardts* in the context of the Second World War much like the original frieze in the aftermath of the Black Plague. As a didactic art form in the tradition of the medieval *memento mori*, the *Totentanz* reminds the individual of his personal responsibility for the community's well-being and confirms God's divine will in the face of mass death. Despite its macabre subject, this work did not aim to instill fear in the viewer. Instead, it was meant to offer comfort and hope; it frames death in a meaningful order and gives sense to the position of powerlessness. It provides an anchor in a horror-filled existence while suggesting that eternal peace will be the just reward for the righteous.

The only human death actually depicted in the film is that of Degenhardt's boss, an unnamed character who laments how his life has been meaningless because he has no wife and no children. Degenhardt's boss is a lonely, sick, old man pictured in death with his hands gently crossed, covered in iridescent lighting, a peaceful end to a barren life. The heroic death of Degenhardt's oldest son Robert on the high seas, by contrast, is never depicted, nor is it even mentioned out loud. The viewer only learns about Robert's death by seeing Father Degenhardt's black armband as he silently hands a letter to a friend and receives condolences.

The destruction of cultural monuments, rather than the portrayal of a warrior's death, merits greater attention in this motion picture. The bombing of Lübeck is presented in a series of dissolves that link the organ built in 1516, a performance of Haydn's *Creation*, the German community gathered to celebrate its musical heritage in St. Mary's Church, the frieze depicting a community of death, and finally the bombed-out city. Accompanying the visual montage is a medley of the *Creation* swallowed up by a pulsating, sirene-like melody with the noise of airplanes dropping bombs. These sounds turn into a funeral march and are followed by a radio news report announcing the attack on German cultural monuments. In this unusual montage sequence the city becomes a surreal landscape of smoking ruins populated by throngs who walk in a daze through the rubble. The dissolves are particularly haunting, for in a strange way they seem to create and destroy the city through the camerawork and editing.

The character of Karl Degenhardt symbolizes German strength in adversity. He fought for his country in the First World War and spent twenty-nine years in military and civil service. When war breaks out again, Degenhardt overcomes his egoism and recognizes that the national good must come

before personal ambitions. Together with the other old men in town, Degenhardt sustains the home front by planting victory gardens to supply the community with badly needed vegetables, and at home he now plays his cello alone. Robert's black-draped photograph rests on the piano while ephemeral images of Degenhardt's other children engaged in war duties are superimposed on the scene. Despite the absence of the children, the sounds of their instruments continue to accompany their father's cello. Combat is now rendered in a twenty-second overlay of images, in a sense bringing the remote war into one's home, in another sense banishing the reality of war to a half-image from a distant realm.

The final sequence reconstitutes the nuclear family, skipping the intermediate generation, to complete the triad of father, mother, and child. Robert's death is accepted as normal; since he has ensured his legacy by procreating, the cycle of life continues in both the smaller cell of the family and in the larger structure of the national family, the *Volksgemeinschaft*. Father Degenhardt reassures his wife (and by extension the audience) that a secure community continues to exist, one that provides each member with a sense of belonging to something larger than the self: "If someone goes away from us forever, then it's arranged that another will always grow up in his place. That's the way it should be in a big family, right? All the more so in the great big family, to which we all truly belong."⁷⁴

Die Degenhardts received extremely mixed reviews. In Vienna it played to 93% capacity and was held over; in Gera the public found the film "too long-winded" (zu langatmig), and in Ulm the audience felt it was well-made, "but too realistic for the present time" (für die Zeit jedoch zu zeitnah). In Berlin, the press corps uniformly praised *Die Degenhardts* for its realism and accurate depiction of life in the immediate crisis of war. Commentators were especially impressed with Heinrich George's performance because it captured the emotional life of the typical German "for whom life is the realization of duty" and because it offered audiences coping strategies for living in "this state between hope and despair."⁷⁵ The film brought in a disappointing 3.5 million RM and was generally considered a flop. However, after Hitler's order to create the *Volkssturm* (militia) in September 1944, the Propaganda Ministry called for the revival of "great national films," including *Die Degenhardts*.⁷⁶

The Limits of Enchantment

All three home-front films depict the struggle between duty and pleasure through characters who conquer their own personal desires and surrender themselves to the public's immediate needs. This narrative trope internalizes the geopolitical conflict in the way that the individual must first win a battle with himself before the nation can win the greater military battle.

The overwhelming success of *Wunschkonzert* and *Die große Liebe* was based in part on their use of popular culture to promote this story line. In these two films it is entertainment as much as war that unites the community. The romantic and humorous stories coupled with cheerful music generate an overall optimistic tone: suffering seems easily contained or sublimated through sentimental music. Both films present young lovers separated by war and end just short of a wedding ceremony. A brief lull in the fighting and a last shot of the couple together imply that offscreen the characters can finally marry and fulfill their long postponed emotional and sexual desires. The open-ended narratives encourage the audience to continue imagining the story long after they leave the cinema.

In *Die Degenhardts* German high culture is, like the times, somber and grave. Degenhardt's birthday serenade performed as a solo, Haydn's *Creation* interrupted by bombs, and the ruins of German architectural monuments hardly inspire optimism and confidence in victory. The story of an old man's personal success is a closed narrative with few possibilities for fantasizing after the curtain drops. Moreover, the cost of success is high: death and separation of loved ones become the price for status. In the end, *Die Degenhardts* has a message with little or no appeal: it promotes either a nuclear family of old people and babies bound by mutual dependencies or a community united in death.

The cinematic space for combat and for community grows smaller and smaller as the real war literally comes closer to the doorstep. The public buildings and institutions that offered excitement and frivolous low culture or a genuine sense of common experiences cease to exist. Unlike *Die große Liebe*, *Die Degenhardts* presents no theaters and no movie houses where one can escape the horrors of war for a few hours of illusion. In 1944 the radio even fails to entertain audiences as it did four years earlier in *Wunschkonzert*; in *Die Degenhardts* radio shows consist solely of war reports and martial music.

Since public buildings are completely destroyed in this final home-front film, the German family retreats to the privacy of the living room. This movement away from communal leisure space ironically mirrors the actual closure of theaters shortly after *Die Degenhardts* premiered. To free up the necessary resources for total war, Goebbels ordered all theaters, variety shows, cabarets, and acting schools closed as of September 1, 1944. Cinemas, by contrast, would stay open and continue to provide distraction and amusement. However, Nazi officials secretly acknowledged that the number of moviegoers had dropped substantially in late 1944, primarily because Allied bombs were increasingly destroying the movie theaters; and those still open and makeshift theaters lacked the necessary film prints to meet the demand.⁷⁷

By stressing communal forms of popular entertainment, *Wunschkonzert* and *Die große Liebe* created explicit and highly pleasurable points of identification for the German audience from 1940 to 1942. These films present an exuberant onscreen audience and grant a behind-the-scenes look at the war-

driven entertainment industry. The onscreen audience holds up a mirror to the moviegoer to look at himself and imagine his own participation in the nation's real-life drama. Like all successful entertainment films in the Third Reich, *Wunschkonzert* and *Die große Liebe* re-establish the contours of normality. They train the spectator to fantasize reality in such a way that war becomes a positive force in the end. War brings people together, transforms the ordinary into the spectacular, intensifies feelings, and helps the individual become stronger. Nazi entertainment films work in tandem to allow spectators to insulate themselves from the upsetting aspects of reality, extricating troubling events and replacing them with palatable alternatives. The mindset created in the movies is ultimately transferable to everyday life so that the audience can imagine total war as tenable.

The shift in 1944 to a more somber look at total war corresponded to the gravity of the military situation, but it also illustrates the limitations of fantasy. Without the necessary connections to reality, without belief in at least the possibility of victory, the story of a happy national community united through light entertainment simply does not ring true. *Die Degenhardts*'s poor showing at the box office reflects more than just the closure of bombed-out movie theaters. The story of an ordinary family that must die to preserve German high culture was not the self-definition and national narrative the German home front wanted to buy as their world collapsed.

Notes

¹ "Der Film ist ein Teil der Wehrmacht geworden. Wie diese verwirklicht er die entscheidenden Eigenschaften der Technik: Schnelligkeit, Präzision, stoßhafte Wirkung in die Breiten." Frank Maraun, "Unsere Wehrmacht im Film," *Der deutsche Film* 4, no. 12 (June 1940): 227.

² The combat film enjoyed a brief high point in 1941 when five films premiered: *Kampfgeschwader Lützow* (Hans Bertram), *Über alles in der Welt* (Karl Ritter), *Spähtrupp Hallgarten* (Herbert B. Fredersdorf), *U-Boote westwärts* (Günther Rittau), and *Stukas* (Karl Ritter). In 1941 two other films with related subjects appeared: *Blutsbrüderschaft* (Philip Lothar Mayring) deals with the First World War, the interwar period, and the start of the Second World War, and *Auf Wiedersehen, Franziska* (Helmuth Käutner) centers on a photo journalist in the interwar period who is later drafted into a propaganda company. By 1942, the combat film was out of favor with the Propaganda Ministry. *Der 5. Juni* (Fritz Kirchhoff) was banned in November 1942, but the reasons behind the ban remain unclear. Some film historians have argued that Goebbels disliked the overly didactic treatment of the French defeat and the Nazi government's relationship to Vichy-France. Other historians cite Goebbels's personal disputes with the Wehrmacht as possible grounds for the ban. *Besatzung Dora* (Karl Ritter) was banned in November 1943 and only given a closed screening to the Luftwaffe on February 2, 1945. *Besatzung Dora* was undoubtedly censored because the storyline of Luftwaffe pilots fighting in North Africa and

dreaming of settling in Russia after the war was completely unrealistic in November 1943, just months after Germany's crushing defeats at Stalingrad in February 1943 and in North Africa in May 1943. For further information on censorship, see Kraft Wetzel and Peter A. Hagemann, *Zensur: Verbotene deutsche Filme 1933–1945* (Berlin: Volker Spiess, 1978); and Felix Moeller, *Der Filmminister: Goebbels und der Film im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: Henschel, 1998), 313–46.

³ Furlough films include *Sechs Tage Heimaturlaub* (1941, Jürgen von Alten), *Zwei in einer großen Stadt* (1942, Volker von Collande), and *Ein schöner Tag* (1944, Philip Lothar Mayring). *Eine kleine Sommermelodie*, directed by Volker von Collande, was censored in November 1944 and never premiered.

⁴ The three most prominent home-front films are analyzed in this essay. Of interest is also *Frontheater* (1942, Arthur Maria Rabenalt), which depicts a theater troop performing at the front during the Second World War.

⁵ See Marlis G. Steinart, *Hitler's War and the Germans: Public Mood and Attitude during the Second World War*, trans. Thomas E. J. de Witt (Athens, Ohio: Ohio UP, 1977), 50–65.

⁶ Jay Baird, *The Mythical World of Nazi Propaganda 1939–1945* (Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 1974), 41–56; and David Welch, *The Third Reich: Politics and Propaganda* (Routledge: New York, 1993), 90–97.

⁷ According to editorials in the trade papers, the British and French governments had ordered the closing of all cinemas after declaring war on Germany, “Das deutsche Filmwesen während des Kriegszustandes,” *Der deutsche Film* 4, no. 4 (October 1939): 94; and *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 206 (September 5, 1939). For articles on Germany's active role in promoting the cinema at home and on the front, see Hermann Gressieker, “Die Parole des deutschen Films,” *Der deutsche Film* 4, no. 3 (September 1939): 63–67; “Der Film in Kriegszeiten: Neue Aufgaben und neue Pläne,” *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 245 (October 20, 1939); and Curt Belling, “Der Film im Fronteinsatz,” *Film-Illustrierte* (December 10, 1939).

⁸ Joseph Goebbels, “Das Kulturleben im Kriege,” speech from November 27, 1939, in *Die Zeit ohne Beispiel: Reden und Aufsätze aus den Jahren 1939/40/41* (Munich: Franz Eher Verlag, 1941), 220.

⁹ In 1939 there were 6,667 cinemas with 2.4 million seats in the Reich, and the average German went to the movies 10.5 times a year. By 1942 there were 6,537 cinemas with 2.6 million seats, and the average German attended the movies 14.3 times a year. See Eric Rentschler, *The Ministry of Illusion: Nazi Cinema and Its Afterlife* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1996), 247, 258; Bogusław Drewniak, *Der deutsche Film 1938–1945: Ein Gesamtüberblick* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1987), 608, 623; and David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933–1945* (New York: Oxford UP, 1983), 35.

¹⁰ Hans Dieter Schäfer, *Das gespaltene Bewußtsein: Deutsche Kultur und Lebenswirklichkeit 1933–1945* (Munich: Hanser, 1981), 114–62.

¹¹ Goebbels, “Das Kulturleben im Kriege,” 219.

¹² According to Fritz Hippler, “This film was Goebbels's pet project; he even collaborated on the screenplay, wrote dialogues, and determined the particular singers

and musicians who were to perform in the big productions,” *Die Verstrickung* (Düsseldorf: Mehr Wissen, 1981), 216. Goebbels wrote in his diary on December 31, 1940: “The premiere of ‘Request Concert’ in the Ufa-Palast am Zoo. Big hit. The film received stormy applause. I’m all the happier about it, since the idea came from me. Once again we did a good job. Above all the extraordinary popular character of the film was appealing. It will ignite the entire German folk,” *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels: Sämtliche Fragmente*, ed. Elke Fröhlich, Part I: Aufzeichnungen 1924–1942, 9 vols. (Munich: K. G. Saur, 1987), 1. 4: 451.

¹³ Recent studies treating *Wunschkonzert* include Marc Silberman, *German Cinema: Texts in Context* (Detroit: Wayne State UP, 1995), 66–80; Linda Schulte-Sasse, *Entertaining the Third Reich: Illusions of Wholeness in Nazi Cinema* (Durham: Duke UP, 1996), 288–301; Mary-Elizabeth O’Brien, “Aestheticizing War: Eduard von Borsody’s *Wunschkonzert* (1940),” *Seminar* 33, no. 1 (1997): 36–49; and David Bathrick, “Radio und Film für ein modernes Deutschland: Das NS-Wunschkonzert,” in *Dschungel Großstadt: Kino und Modernisierung*, ed. Irmbert Schenk (Marburg: Schüren, 1999), 112–31.

¹⁴ “Das allermodernste und das allerwichtigste Massenbeeinflussungsinstrument.” Joseph Goebbels, speech from March 25, 1933, in *Reden*, ed. Helmut Heiber (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1971), 1: 91.

¹⁵ “Nur nicht langweilig werden. Nur keine Öde. Nur nicht die Gesinnung auf den Präsentierteller legen. Nur nicht glauben, man könne sich im Dienste der nationalen Regierung am besten betätigen, wenn man Abend für Abend schmetternde Märsche ertönen läßt. . . . Gesinnung muß sein, aber Gesinnung braucht nicht Langeweile zu bedeuten. Die Phantasie muß alle Mittel und Methoden in Anspruch nehmen, um die neue Gesinnung modern, aktuell und interessiert den breiten Massen zu Gehör zu bringen, interessant und lehrreich, aber nicht belehrend. Der Rundfunk soll niemals an dem Wort kränken, man merkt die Absicht und wird verstimmt.” Goebbels, *Reden*, 1: 82–83.

¹⁶ Detlev J. K. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life*, trans. Richard Deveson (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987), 78.

¹⁷ Goebbels, *Die Tagebücher von Joseph Goebbels*, 1. 3: 611.

¹⁸ Conrad F. Latour, “Goebbels ‘Außerordentliche Rundfunkmaßnahmen’ 1939–1942,” *Vierteljahrshefte für Zeitgeschichte* 11 (1963): 418–35.

¹⁹ “Gerade seine ‘örtliche Ungebundenheit’ schien den Rundfunk als Medium eines ‘imaginären Raumes’ besonders dafür zu qualifizieren, die ‘innere Einheit aller Deutschen als ‘Volksgemeinschaft’ zu befördern.” Peter Reichel, *Der schöne Schein des dritten Reiches: Faszination und Gewalt des Faschismus* (Munich: Hanser, 1991), 165.

²⁰ The last “Request Concert for the Armed Forces” was the seventy-fifth broadcast on May 25, 1941. For an analysis of this popular radio show, see Nanny Drechsler, *Die Funktion der Musik im deutschen Rundfunk 1933–1945* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus, 1988), 131–34, 153.

²¹ “Eine Stimme schwingt durch den Äther. ‘Hier ist der großdeutsche Rundfunk! Wir beginnen das Wunschkonzert für die Wehrmacht.’ Ein magisches Band umschlingt Front und Heimat. Im Unterstand in Frankreich, im U-Boot auf Feindfahrt, im Fliegerhorst an der Küste, im stillen Zimmer einer Mutter, in Tausenden-Hunderttausenden von Woh-

nungen, überall klingt und schwingt der Strom von Wort und Lied und Musik. [. . .] Leid und Freude des einzelnen, Unbekannten, Namenlosen wird Leid und Freude der ganzen Nation. Alle Herzen schlagen im gleichen Rhythmus des Empfindens." *Wunschkonzert, Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 3166 (Berlin: Franke & Co, 1940).

²² "Wer einmal ein solches Wunschkonzert hörte, weiß, wie in solchen Stunden Volk und Wehrmacht sich zu einer einzigen großen Familie verbunden fühlen. Er begreift die ungeheure Bedeutung des Rundfunkes als des Mittels, das allein heute in der Lage ist, achtzig Millionen Menschen zu einem großen Gemeinschaftserlebnis zusammenzufassen. So vermitteln die Wunschkonzerte jedem Deutschen auch das Gefühl der Kraft und Zusammengehörigkeit." Alfred-Ingemar Berndt, foreword to *Wir beginnen das Wunschkonzert für die Wehrmacht*, by Heinz Goedecke and Wilhelm Krug (Berlin: Nibelungen, 1940), 8. Emphasis added.

²³ Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," in *Illuminations: Essays and Reflections*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans. Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 1968), 223. "Die Dinge sich räumlich und menschlich 'näherzubringen.'" Walter Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk im Zeitalter seiner technischen Reproduzierbarkeit* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1963), 15.

²⁴ Benjamin, "The Work of Art," 242. "Faschismus [. . .] erwartet die künstlerische Befriedigung der von der Technik veränderten Sinneswahrnehmung [. . .] vom Kriege." Benjamin, *Das Kunstwerk*, 44.

²⁵ Cooper C. Graham, *Leni Riefenstahl and Olympia* (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow, 1986); Duff Hart-Davis, *Hitler's Games: The 1936 Olympics* (London: Century, 1986); and Richard Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics* (New York: Macmillan, 1971).

²⁶ Albert Speer, *Inside the Third Reich*, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York: Macmillan, 1970), 114.

²⁷ Hilmar Hoffmann, "Und die Fahne führt uns in die Ewigkeit": *Propaganda im NS-Film* (Frankfurt a. M.: Fischer, 1988), 152.

²⁸ Stephen Lowry, *Pathos und Politik: Ideologie im Spielfilm des Nationalsozialismus* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1991), 178.

²⁹ Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1947), 279.

³⁰ Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 279.

³¹ Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, 280.

³² Paul Virilio, *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*, trans. Patrick Camiller (London: Verso, 1989), 7.

³³ Virilio, *War and Cinema*, 7.

³⁴ Virilio, *War and Cinema*, 15.

³⁵ Steinert, *Hitler's War and the Germans*, 65–72; and Heinz Boberach, ed., *Meldungen aus dem Reich: Auswahl geheime Lageberichten des Sicherheitsdienstes der SS 1939–1944*, 17 vols. (Berlin: Pawlak Verlag Herrsching, 1965).

³⁶ David B. Dennis, *Beethoven in German Politics 1870–1989* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1996), 142–74.

³⁷ Goebbels, "Das Kulturleben im Kriege," 223. Goebbels's reference to "plutocrats" was typical anti-British propaganda portraying the English as allied with the Jews in a conspiracy to dominate the world, see Baird, *The Mythical World of Nazi Propaganda*, 120–21.

³⁸ Jeffrey Herf explores the selective use of modern technology coupled with *völkisch* ideology in *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture, and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1984).

³⁹ Saul Friedländer defines the Nazi kitsch of death as "not real death in its everyday horror and tragic banality, but a ritualized, stylized, and aestheticized death. . . . Nazi death is a show, a production, a performance," *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death*, trans. Thomas Weyr (New York: Harper & Row, 1984), 43–44.

⁴⁰ "[Es] war plötzlich still an Bord. Wenn das, was wir sahen, wahr war, dann müßte Köln zerstört sein. Wir blickten auf den Rhein, aber es war kein Irrtum: Was wir da unten sahen, war die Wirklichkeit." Qtd. in Wolfgang Paul, *Der Heimatkrieg 1939 bis 1945* (Esslingen am Neckar: Bechtle, 1980), 111. For a description of Operation Millennium and the Cologne bombing see Paul, *Der Heimatkrieg*, 105–17; Adolf Klein, *Köln im Dritten Reich: Stadtgeschichte der Jahre 1933–1945* (Cologne: Greven, 1983), 252–56; Wilber H. Morrison, *Fortress Without a Roof: The Allied Bombing of the Third Reich* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1982), 24–31; Charles Messenger, "Bomber" Harris and the Strategic Bombing Offensive, 1939–1945 (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984), 74–78.

⁴¹ Martin Loiperdinger and Klaus Schönekäs, "Die große Liebe: Propaganda im Unterhaltungsfilm," in *Bilder schreiben Geschichte: Der Historiker im Kino*, ed. Rainer Rother (Berlin: Wagenbach), 143. According to Stephen Lowry, the premiere run in Berlin lasted ninety-one days, while the average run was twenty-eight days, with the range from six to ninety-one days (*Pathos und Politik*, 20). Eric Rentschler notes that *Die große Liebe* registered an all-time record of over 400,000 admissions at the Berlin Ufa-Palast am Zoo for the period June 12 to August 29, 1942 (*The Ministry of Illusion*, 260). Klaus Kreimeier lists the film's gross at 9.2 million Reichmarks and the audience at nearly 28 million based on the period up to November 1944 (*Die Ufa-Story: Geschichte eines Filmkonzerns* [Munich: Hanser, 1992], 371).

⁴² Typical is this review from Maria Waas: "The film takes its plot from our immediate present, the battle between love and duty grows out of the demands of the day and gives the film convincing true-to-life qualities" [Unmittelbar aus unserer Zeit nimmt der Film seine Handlung, der Kampf zwischen Liebe und Pflicht wächst aus den Forderungen unserer Tage und gibt dem Film überzeugende Lebensnähe] (n.t., n.p., n.d.), *Die große Liebe*, Document File 6214, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. See also "Die große Liebe: Zarah Leander und Paul Hörbiger in einem neuen Film," *Filmwelt* 47/48 (November 26, 1941); "Große Dekoration für Zarah Leander: Bei den Aufnahmen zu dem Ufa-Film *Die große Liebe*," *Film-Kurier* 30 (February 6, 1942); Wilhelm Hackbarth, "Das Lied der Hanna Holberg," *Filmwelt* 7/8 (February 18, 1942); and Hans Suchen, "Die große Liebe," *Filmwelt* 23/24 (June 24, 1942).

⁴³ At a dinner party Paul hears the announcement: "German National Radio will interrupt its program for a short period," and recognizes that radio silence means a pending Allied strike.

⁴⁴ “Die Sirene bringt es an den Tag.” All dialogues are taken from the videocassette copy of *Die große Liebe* available in commercial release. The censor cards provide a narrative description of the action but not the dialogues. Compare *Die große Liebe*, Censor-Card 57295, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

⁴⁵ Paul: “Donnerwetter! Schön, was? Hanna: “Mmm, wie ein Märchen.” Paul: “Nein, viel schöner, wie die Wirklichkeit.” *Die große Liebe* film dialogue.

⁴⁶ “Ich weiß, es wird einmal ein Wunder geschehen und dann werden tausend Märchen wahr.” *Die große Liebe* film dialogue.

⁴⁷ I am grateful to Glenn Cuomo for bringing the following citation to my attention. Joseph Goebbels’s diary entry from May 14, 1942, reads: “The new Leander film ‘True Love’ was shown. It attempts to incorporate a private story into the greater war experience, and it does so rather skillfully. The film can hardly lay claim to artistic merit, but it will certainly be a very effective crowd pleaser.” *Goebbels Tagebücher*, Hoover Institute, Reel 3, frames 2750–51, pages 15–16 of typed manuscript.

⁴⁸ In the song “Davon geht die Welt nicht unter,” Hanna sings, “Geht’s mal drüber und mal drunter.” *Die große Liebe* film dialogue.

⁴⁹ Micaela Jary relates the genesis of this song in her book, *Ich weiß, es wird einmal ein Wunder gescheh’n: Die große Liebe der Zarah Leander* (Berlin: edition q, 1993), 177–85. She writes that Leander, Jary’s father the composer Michael Jary, and lyricist Bruno Balz (who wrote the text directly after his release from Gestapo arrest), considered the song openly subversive. They thought it would be obvious that the song did not refer to the end of the war or separation but to the end of the Nazi regime.

⁵⁰ “Der Film erzeugt nämlich neben der persönlichen Verbindung des Zuschauers zum Hauptdarsteller während des Filmablaufes zugleich auch das Bestreben, diesem gleich zu sein. Wie er sich räuspert und wie er spuckt, wie er gekleidet ist, wie er sich benimmt, ob und was er trinkt, was und wie er raucht, ob er ein Bieder- oder ein Lebemann ist, das alles hat nicht nur seine Wirkung im Film, sondern auch im Leben des Zuschauers. Ein kraftgeladener und sieghafter Film entläßt ein anderes Publikum als ein tragischer oder ein komischer Film. Nach einem Albers-Film ist auch der Hilfsfriseur ein Albers; niemand sollte es wagen, sich mit ihm einzulassen.” Fritz Hippler, *Betrachtungen zum Filmschaffen*, 5th rev. ed. (Berlin: Max Hesses Verlag, 1943), 95.

⁵¹ “[Der Heimatfrontfilm ruft] jene innere Bereitschaft wach, sich voll und ganz an die Figuren und das Geschehen um sie zu verlieren, das ist bei diesen Filmen selbstverständlich vorhanden, denn jeder Zuschauer, Soldat oder Zivilist, Mann oder Frau, hat einen Menschen ‘dabei,’ identifiziert augenblicks das Schicksal auf der Leinwand mit dem des Freundes oder Mannes, des Bruders oder Bräutigams, kurz, jeder Zuschauer sitzt nach den ersten Bildern mit gläubigem, aufgeschlossenem Herzen im Parkett.” “Film und Zeitgeschehen: Zu dem Terra-Film Fronttheater,” *Der deutsche Film* 7, no. 1 (July 1942): 8.

⁵² In her analysis of the filmic love story, Mary Ann Doane notes, “the genre does seem to require that the male character undergo a process of feminization.” (*The Desire to Desire: The Woman’s Film of the 1940s* [Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987], 116).

⁵³ “Er läßt seine Maschine nicht im Stich.” *Die große Liebe* film dialogue.

⁵⁴ "Wir haben beide den selben Stern, und dein Schicksal ist auch meins." *Die große Liebe* film dialogue.

⁵⁵ "Mein Maxe in der Hand ist mir mehr wert als Albert auf der Trapeze." *Die große Liebe* film dialogue.

⁵⁶ As early as late autumn 1939, German consumers were complaining about the inadequate food supplies, coal shortages, and the lack of shoes; see Steinert, *Hitler's War and the Germans*, 59, 64–65. By the time *Die große Liebe* began filming in autumn 1941, Security Service reports compiled over the summer warned that the "catastrophic food situation" had triggered widespread resentment and low morale (Steinert, 121). Food shortages and deteriorating public mood only worsened in the winter of 1942, as filming of *Die große Liebe* concluded. The perceived threat posed by British bombing raids escalated in a similar manner. While RAF aerial strikes against the Reich in the summer of 1940 were largely symbolic gestures causing little damage, they nonetheless contributed to low morale on the German home front. The heavy bombing raid on Berlin in August 1940 left many citizens bewildered and discouraged. See Steinert, 77; and Baird, *The Mythical World of Nazi War Propaganda*, 127–30.

⁵⁷ Boberach, *Meldungen aus dem Reich*, 263–64, 266, 267.

⁵⁸ The strong man Albert also uses food to express his love for Hanna. He gives her coffee, a commodity in short supply, which Paul takes control of in a later scene, as if to illustrate the difference between requited and unrequited love.

⁵⁹ George Mosse discusses the centrality of the German First World War experience for the rise of National Socialism in his article, "Two World Wars and the Myth of the War Experience," *Journal of Contemporary History* 21 (October 1986): 491–514.

⁶⁰ "Die Gemeinschaft von Schwert und Leier — so wie sie sich im Betreuungswerk für unsere Soldaten bewährte — bedeutet das herrlichste Symbol des deutschen Sieges über die uns feindliche, gestrige plutokratische Welt." Hans Hinkel, "Der Einsatz unserer Kunst im Krieg," *Der deutsche Film* 6, no. 11/12 (May/June 1941): 217. SS Officer Hans Hinkel, appointed Secretary General of the Reichskulturkammer (Reich Chamber of Culture) in 1936 and Reichsfilmintendant (Reich Film Director) in 1944, was responsible for numerous projects, including the implementation of anti-Semitic cultural policy and the organization of troop entertainment during the war. According to Hinkel, 15,000 cultural events were staged for troops in the West in the winter 1939–1940.

⁶¹ "Manchmal ist's mir selber, daß ich tot sein möchte." *Die große Liebe* film dialogue.

⁶² Jane Feuer, "The Self-Reflexive Musical and the Myth of Entertainment," in *Film Genre Reader*, ed. Barry Keith Grant (Austin: U of Texas P), 329–43.

⁶³ Lowry discusses the centrality of the cellar scene for establishing Hanna and Paul as potential parents (*Pathos und Politik*, 164–70).

⁶⁴ "Ist sie eine rechte Mutter, so verliert sie sich selbst in ihrer Familienaufgabe. Aber wunderbar: gerade dadurch wird sie im tiefsten Sinn Frau und Mensch. Je selbstverständlicher sie sich aufgibt, desto mehr. Im Verlieren ihres Lebens findet sie sich, ihre wahre Würde, ihren eigensten Menschen. . . . Sie wird Mutter und damit Vollmensch auf dem Weg der Selbstverleugnung, nicht auf dem der Selbststbehauptung."

tung." Guida Diehl, *Die deutsche Frau und der Nationalsozialismus* (Eisenach: Neulandverlag, 1933), 92.

⁶⁵ Günter Berghaus, ed., *Fascism and Theatre: Comparative Studies on the Aesthetics and Politics of Performance in Europe, 1925–1945* (Providence: Berghahn, 1996), 5.

⁶⁶ Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), 200, 202–3. I am indebted to Bruce Campbell for his careful reading of this essay at an early stage and suggestions on the controlling nature of participatory theater.

⁶⁷ David F. Crew, Introduction to Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Gerhard Paul, "Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent? Gestapo, Society and Resistance," in *Nazism and German Society, 1933–1945*, ed. David F. Crew (New York: Rutledge, 1994), 166. For an interesting study of the dream world in Nazi Germany, see Charlotte Beradt, *Das Dritte Reich des Traums* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1981).

⁶⁸ Klaus-Michael Mallmann and Gerhard Paul, "Omniscient, Omnipotent, Omnipresent? Gestapo, Society and Resistance," in *Nazism and German Society, 1933–1945*, ed. David Crew (New York: Rutledge, 1994), 173; see also Robert Gellately, *The Gestapo and German Society: Enforcing Racial Policy, 1933–1945* (New York: Oxford UP, 1990).

⁶⁹ Gerd Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik: Eine soziologische Untersuchung über die Spielfilme des Dritten Reichs* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1969), 110.

⁷⁰ *Die Degenhardts* passed the censor in Berlin on June 28, 1944, with the distinction marks "politically valuable" and "artistically valuable," *Die Degenhardts*, Censor-Card 60153, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. The censor cards contain no dialogues and no narrative description of the action. All dialogues are taken from the videocassette copy of *Die Degenhardts* available in commercial release.

⁷¹ In retaliation for the Royal Air Force's bombing attacks on artistically significant buildings in German cities, including Lübeck on March 28, 1942, and Rostock on April 23, 1942, the Luftwaffe launched its own *Baedekerangriffe* (Baedeker bombing raids, named after the popular German tourist guidebooks) on the culturally rich but militarily insignificant English cities of Bath, Canterbury, Exeter, Norwich, and York between April and October of 1942. For a description of the Lübeck and Baedeker bombing raids, see Lothar Gruchmann, *Totaler Krieg: Vom Blitzkrieg zur bedingungsloser Kapitulation* (Munich: dtv, 1991), 158.

⁷² For a study of the ideology of gardening and landscape design in Nazi Germany, see Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn and Gert Gröning, "The National Socialist Garden and Landscape Ideal: Bodenständigkeit (Rootedness in the Soil)," in *Art, Culture, and Media under the Third Reich*, ed. Richard Etlin (Chicago: Chicago UP, 2002), 73–97.

⁷³ An excellent anthology on the Lübeck *Totentanz*, complete with extensive reproductions, can be found in Hartmut Freytag, ed., *Der Totentanz der Marienkirche in Lübeck und der Nikolaikirche in Reval (Tallinn)*, Niederdeutsche Studien 39 (Cologne: Böhlau, 1993).

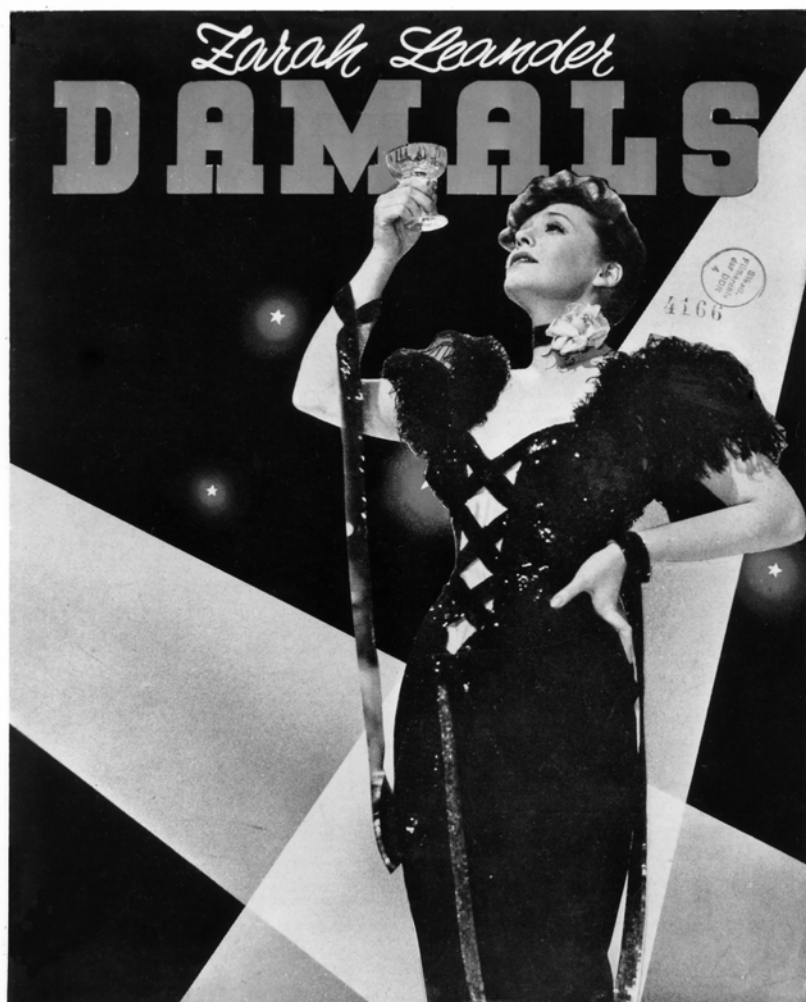
⁷⁴ "Und wenn auch mal einer für immer von uns geht, dann ist es so eingerichtet, daß immer ein anderer nach wächst. So sollte es auch sein, nicht, in einer großen

Familie. So ist es erst recht in der ganz großen Familie, zu der wir ja alle gehören.” *Die Degenhardts* film dialogue.

⁷⁵ See Felix Henseleit, “*Die Degenhardts*,” *Film-Kurier* (August 15, 1944); and Lothar Papke, “Familienroman von heute: *Die Degenhardts*,” *Völkischer Beobachter*, Berlin edition (August 13, 1944). Wilhelm Westecker wrote that the film was characterized by “diesen Zustand zwischen Hoffnung und Enttäuschung,” Wilhelm Westecker, “Filmepos einer deutschen Familie: *Die Degenhardts* im Tauentzienpalast,” *Berliner Börsen-Zeitung* (August 12, 1944). Theo Fürstenau admired the film for its portrayal of “die seelische Haltung des unkomplizierten grundanständigen Menschen, dem das Leben Verwirklichung der Pflichten ist.” Theo Fürstenau, “*Die Degenhardts*,” *Deutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (August 13, 1944).

⁷⁶ Drewniak, *Der deutsche Film*, 400–401, 631, 647–48; and Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 118.

⁷⁷ Drewniak, *Der deutsche Film*, 619, 625–27; and Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 220–21.



The erotic woman: Zarah Leander in *Damals* (1940).

4: Discontented Domesticity: The Melodrama

THE CINEMATIC MELODRAMA of the Third Reich engaged the popular imagination with penetrating images of strong, tormented women and discontented family life. Boasting some of the most successful films produced in Nazi Germany, the melodrama was an immensely popular genre, especially in the waning years of the Second World War. The portrayal of unhappy, dysfunctional families exerted a fascination on audiences altogether incongruous with Nazi ideology concerning the Aryan home as the bastion of social harmony. This disparity between the rosy picture painted in propaganda posters and the pessimistic narratives of popular entertainment has yet to be scrutinized with sufficient vigor.¹

The melodrama emphasizes family conflict, especially women's trials and tribulations, as well as the traditional sphere of the feminine (feelings, domesticity, personal relationships) and is, therefore, uniquely suited to an inquiry into the symbolic encoding of gender difference. In this chapter I will explore the ways in which the melodrama treats sexuality and gender roles within the context of the fascist state. The Nazi-controlled media did not engender a single universal image of woman, rather they presented an entertaining model of social justice whereby the "abnormal woman" is contained and eliminated while the "normal woman" is reintegrated into a joyless marriage. My interest in the fascist melodrama is grounded in the historical nexus of woman, pain, sacrifice, and self-negation coupled with man, taming, domestication, and self-identity as a means to validate the prevailing order. Two films exemplify complementary discursive strategies in Nazi cinema to neutralize subversive energy. *Opfergang* (Rite of Sacrifice, 1944) directed by Veit Harlan and *Damals* (Back Then, 1943) directed by Rolf Hansen employ the two most common and diametrically opposed narrative solutions to the disintegration of the family: the death of the erotic woman and her reintegration into the nuclear family respectively.

At the core of Nazi social policy lies the notion of a "natural" distinction between the sexes that requires the separation of male and female domains into clearly demarcated spheres of influence. Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, the Reich Leader of the National Socialist Womanhood organization, summarizes the official outlook:

From the beginning of time man and woman have been two different beings, with likewise different functions. Seen purely biologically, the role of the man in maintaining the human race is relatively short lived, that of woman is an unequally longer one full of sacrifices. She shelters for many months the future of a people in her womb — gives birth amid pain, protects and preserves the future with every fiber of her heart.²

The reproductive difference between men and women is conceived as a fundamental truth that determines the entire social structure of the nation: “This basic truth which cannot be suppressed . . . is the starting point for all further formations of collective life and work in every cultivated people.”³ The polarity between the sexes necessitates a division of labor that allows men to become creative agents and forces women to fulfill their role as guardians of cultural traditions. Gertrud Scholtz-Klink maintained: “The task of the man in a healthy people will always be primarily the creative act, that of the woman the shaping, protecting, maintaining, preserving. These natural characteristic features of woman include, beyond physical motherhood, all instinctive tendencies to spiritual and mental motherliness.”⁴

Motherhood, whether physical or spiritual, is based on a woman’s ability to sublimate her own interests and needs for her family. Guida Diehl, leader of the Neuland movement, advances the prevailing notion that woman can only achieve the status of human being when she ceases to exist as an individual: “If she is a real mother, she loses herself in her familial duties. But wonderfully: exactly therein, she becomes a woman and human being in the deepest sense. The more obvious her surrender, the more so. In losing her life she finds herself, her true dignity, her inherent humanity.”⁵ The valorization of racially and socially “valuable” mothers epitomized in the elaborate Mother’s Day festivities and the awarding of the Mother’s Cross to women with four or more children shrouds the inherently misogynist aspects of National Socialism. Reduced to her biological function in the mother cult, deprived of desire and even identity through self-denial, the individual woman vanishes.

Recent film studies dealing with the Hollywood melodrama are predicated on a basic assumption about the American society that engenders images of discontented family life. At the most elementary level, the United States is seen as a culture “in which the choice of marriage partners is, in theory at least, completely free.”⁶ Nazi Germany, by contrast, was a society in which the individual’s right to marry at will was so severely restricted as to be nearly non-existent. The National Socialist state regulated marriage according to racial, hereditary, health, and behavioral criteria. One of the first intrusions by the state into the “private” realm of the family was the Law for the Prevention of Progeny with Hereditary Diseases of July 14, 1933, which allowed for compulsory sterilization of those individuals deemed “unfit.” The infamous Nuremberg Laws of September 15, 1935 went further to criminal-

ize not only marriage but also sexual intercourse between an Aryan and a Jew. According to the Marriage Health Law issued in October 1935, the right to marry at all was contingent on a couple's racial and hereditary "fitness." Only after a medical examination proved their physical health could a couple obtain a certificate from the health department and marry.⁷

The National Socialist government instituted measures to promote marriages between partners who would produce "racially valuable" children. The Law for the Reduction of Unemployment from June 1, 1933, offered interest free loans of up to 1,000 RM to newlyweds on the condition that the wife gave up her paid employment. With the birth of each child the couple was given a 25% reduction of the marriage loan.⁸ State intervention into the realm of procreation was not limited to incentives to encourage the birthrate of "valuable" offspring; it also included draconian measures to prevent the birth of racially "worthless" life and exterminate "hereditarily inferior" children. The Law for the Prevention of Progeny with Hereditary Diseases was amended on June 26, 1935, to allow for the termination of pregnancy based on eugenic grounds. Those who performed abortions on hereditarily healthy women, by contrast, were punished with imprisonment and, after the outbreak of war, with death.⁹

Individual self-fulfillment, personal happiness, passion, companionship, and affection played no role in Adolf Hitler's concept of marriage in the National Socialist state: "Furthermore, marriage cannot be an end in itself, rather it must serve the one greater goal, the propagation and maintenance of the species and race. This alone is its meaning and purpose."¹⁰ The propaganda campaign directed at the broad masses, while highlighting the biological basis of "proper" marriages, made concessions to socially ingrained attitudes on free choice as illustrated in the "Ten Commandments for Choosing a Spouse":

Remember that you are a German!
 You should keep your mind and soul pure!
 Keep your body pure!
 You should not remain single, if you are hereditarily healthy!
 Marry only for love!
 As a German, choose only a spouse of the same or related blood!
 When choosing a spouse, ask about his ancestors!
 Health is the prerequisite for external beauty!
 Choose a companion for marriage, not a playmate!
 You should wish for as many children as possible!¹¹

The government viewed marriage primarily as a social institution to maintain and perpetuate racial "purity," so it strenuously enforced the selection of spouses according to racial, hereditary, and health criteria with the

explicit purpose of producing children. The centrality of love in this formulation, the fifth of Ten Commandments, does not attest to the importance of individual emotional needs in Nazi ideology. "The motive here," as Jill Stephenson rightly points out, "was that a loving couple would be more likely to provide a stable home, and so it was thought, many children."¹²

The German melodrama of the 1940s shares much with its Hollywood counterpart. Along with classic Hollywood cinema, Nazi film is firmly rooted in the discursive tradition that sets out to expose and contain the inconsistencies evident in patriarchy. "Ideological contradiction," Laura Mulvey argues, "is the overt mainspring and specific content of melodrama, not a hidden, unconscious thread to be picked up only by special critical processes. No ideology can even pretend to totality: it must provide an outlet for its own inconsistencies."¹³ "As a safety valve for ideological contradictions centered on sex and the family,"¹⁴ the melodrama questions patriarchy's overvaluation of masculinity in terms of virility, power, and conquest. Melodrama seeks compromise between the sexes in a renewed appreciation of femininity and domesticity.

These basic strategies informing the family narrative not only correspond to the project of Nazi melodramas but are also consistent with statements of early National Socialist women leaders. These party ideologues openly acknowledged the potential threat inherent in a society organized exclusively around male fellowship. Lydia Gottschewski, leader of the League of German Girls (*Bund Deutscher Mädel*) argued in her book *Male Union and the Women's Question* (1934) that an exaggerated valuation of masculinity could only lead to the destruction of the community: "The idea of male union (*Männerbund*) as a principle of order has saved our people from the chaos of Bolshevism. But the other must be said: the over exaggeration of this idea, its fixation as the exclusive measure of all things tears the community apart."¹⁵

The fascist melodrama articulates this problem in its construction of gender difference and social integration. Various tropes operate in these films to neutralize any threat to the stability of the nuclear family. In order to survive as a folk, men must make concessions to the domestic order. Men's transgressions revolve around their inappropriate use of masculine values in their relationships with women. Men threaten stability when they refuse to tame indiscriminate sexual drives and to redirect this energy toward their wives. Good husbands, the melodrama instructs, need to recognize the value of their wives' sacrifice and the inherent value of femininity, and, especially, motherliness. Women pose a danger to the domestic order when they assert their own female desire, subjectivity, and activity. Aberrant femininity, exemplified in a woman's mobility, self-interest, and eroticized motherhood is punished with illness, banishment, or death. Women are ultimately judged according to their ability to conform to the ideals of femininity with its apotheosis in motherhood. Good mothers, or potentially good mothers, are integrated into the family while bad mothers are eliminated.

Since it emphasizes paradox and discontent, the melodrama represents a potentially subversive text. Criticism and the call for change, however, are directed inward to the character and not outward to social institutions. In reference to the melodrama, David Bordwell notes that “the characters’ volatility is a structural necessity for the genre’s narrational processes and effects.”¹⁶ The characters adjust themselves to the system rather than look for ways to change society. Those who adapt are rewarded. Those who cannot or will not adapt to the system are conveniently eliminated from the picture. Melodramas, or weepies, as Molly Haskell likewise argues, “are founded on a mock-Aristotelian and politically conservative aesthetic whereby women spectators are moved, not by pity and fear but by self-pity and tears, to accept, rather than reject, their lot.”¹⁷ I would like to expand Haskell’s idea to postulate that the melodrama addresses both men and women in order to maintain the status quo of the patriarchal family unit.

The predominantly female audience widely attributed to the Hollywood melodrama cannot be ascribed to the Nazi melodrama without raising serious problems. The question as to who actually attended the cinema during the Third Reich, more men or more women, and which genres each group favored, is exceedingly difficult to ascertain since the Propaganda Ministry published no statistical analyses of German audiences based on their sex. The few shreds of evidence we can garner from contemporary film journals show us more about prevalent stereotypes than actual audience composition and opinions. Writing in January 1938 for the Propaganda Ministry’s official organ *Der deutsche Film*, Frank Maraun maintains:

Recently we have determined that 70% of all moviegoers are women. Why women go to the movies is clear: they want to see love and have feelings. With one sparkling and one wet eye, feature films never tire of granting them both. Their thoughts also love to circle around human things and ponder psychological conflicts. Here film constantly gives them practice material for life. Moreover, they have naturally a better sense of the arts and a greater inclination to give themselves over to daydreaming. And here too film provides everything needed.¹⁸

Unfortunately, Maraun supplies no details on how the Propaganda Ministry came up with the figure of 70% for the female audience, whether it distributed questionnaires, conducted interviews, or measured ticket sales. In June 1938, the trade paper *Licht-Bild-Bühne* likewise cited that 70% of all moviegoers were women and attributed this statistic to a local study conducted in the city of Hamburg. While not commenting on the narrow scope of the study or whether it could be useful to generalize audience composition throughout Germany, the reviewer for *Licht-Bild-Bühne* disagreed with Maraun’s conclusions and argued that “women and men concur in their demands for artistic, true-to-life films.”¹⁹ Indeed, two conflicting views were

repeatedly voiced on the pages of film journals throughout 1938. In a series of articles addressing what women wanted from the motion picture industry, Ingrid Binné claimed that German women “today no longer watch with disinterest the political process in the Reich and in the world. They actively experience the central events of our time.”²⁰ They do not want fairy tales of riches and ideal love affairs. Instead they want to see films that bring to life Adolf Hitler’s vision of an ideal National Socialist womanhood. Quoting the Führer, Binné asserted that women went to the cinema to see “the eternal mother of our folk and man’s life partner, fellow-worker, and comrade-in-arms.”²¹ Writing for the same trade paper, reviewer Christine Großmann argued along completely different lines. Großmann stated that women “have more imagination, if one understands that as having the ability to dream, the ability to go along with the events unfolding before them on the screen, and the ability to put themselves into these events.”²² Women go to the cinema because they want to fantasize about an exciting and carefree lifestyle and imagine that they could look, dress, and behave like their favorite stars Marlene Dietrich, Greta Garbo, and Joan Crawford up on the silver screen. This debate over what was more appealing and in demand — politically correct role models that reinforced Nazi ideology or amusing escapist fantasies that satisfied emotional needs — tells us less about what ordinary women wanted than about the film industry’s difficulties in fulfilling Goebbels’s mandate for instruction through entertainment. The propaganda ministry called for stirring motion pictures with equal parts ideology and distraction, which would enchant both male and female audiences and persuade them to filter the reality of gender roles in politically acceptable ways.

Recent scholarship on Nazi cinema has rarely addressed the question of audience composition with adequate results. For example, film historian David Welch makes a generalization about German film audiences during the Second World War that demands closer inspection. Welch concludes:

One can reasonably assume that in wartime women and children would make up the majority of the audience. For ideological reasons, relatively few women were employed in Germany during the war compared to Britain and Russia. One reason for this was that the allowances paid to soldiers’ wives were so generous that it was often more economical for them not to work. In times of rationing, hardship, and loneliness, sitting in a warm cinema was an obvious way for such women to spend their time and money.²³

Welch’s statement is misleading on several grounds. First, the assumption that the cinema audience was primarily female during the war years due to military conscription cannot be confirmed with any certitude, and, if we take Hollywood as our model, this assumption seems to work more on the stereotype of the bored housewife than on facts.²⁴ Second, the Propaganda Ministry

took extreme measures to assure that soldiers at the front were provided with mobile cinemas and that feature films constituted an important source of entertainment and education in Nazi party organizations. Indeed, the need for mobile cinemas in rural areas and makeshift cinemas in bombed-out cities indicates that the filmic experience during the war did not universally take place in a warm theater. More importantly, Welch presents woman as a monolithic category not taking into account issues of social class, age, marital status, labor conscription, and volunteer labor. His female audience seems to consist largely of married, middle-class women with nothing better to do than go to the movies. Already before the outbreak of war, 12.7 million German women were gainfully employed outside the home comprising 37% of the workforce.²⁵ Women also performed a considerable amount of unpaid labor that is generally not calculated in standard employment statistics: volunteer work for Winter Relief, the NS-Womanhood, and the League of German Girls, not to mention housework and childcare. The National Socialist regime initiated legal measures to assure women's participation in the wartime labor force. The National Service Law of May 1935, for example, allowed for the wartime industrial conscription of all women ages 15 to 65 who were not pregnant or who did not have children under the age of 15. Likewise, the Women's Labor Service, compulsory as of September 4, 1939, called for unpaid female service to the state in domestic and agricultural economies for up to a year. While compulsory labor measures for Aryan women were never fully implemented in German society, it would be false to conclude that women as a social group were completely free from duties to the state and could devote themselves exclusively to the pursuit of leisure activities.

Various statements from leading political figures and entertainers suggest that the German melodrama was not conceived solely for a female audience. According to comments by Goebbels, the military high command, and members of the film community, the prevailing view was that the melodrama addressed both male and female spectators. Goebbels, for instance, voiced his concern over the effect that the melodrama *Opfergang* would have on soldiers at the front. He also complained that the High Command of the Armed Forces (OKW) created difficulties for him in his film work. In a diary entry for May 23, 1942, Goebbels depicts a widely publicized dispute between himself, the OKW, and Field Marshal Göring over the morality of a Luftwaffe officer who spends the night with a famous singer in the melodrama *Die große Liebe* (True Love).²⁶ The popular star Kristina Söderbaum also acknowledged the great impression her melodrama *Immensee* (1943) left on male spectators. She received numerous letters from soldiers at the front who had found consolation in this "hymn of a loyal wife."²⁷

It seems surprising that the German film community would be concerned with images of men and the reactions of a male audience, since the melodrama focuses chiefly on the lives of women. These female protagonists,

however, are portrayed much less as individuals than as family members. Wife, mother, daughter, lover: these are the primary roles for women. Gerd Albrecht has conducted extensive statistical research on main characters in Nazi films based on their sex and family status and concludes that women are significantly more likely to be defined by kinship than men.²⁸ A woman's place in the family, however, is most often determined by her relationship to a man rather than to another woman. Rarely are relationships between women — sisters, girlfriends or even mother and daughter — so well developed that they become the focal point of these narratives.²⁹ Nazi cinema is conceived on the premise that the audience not only identifies with the film characters but also tries to emulate their behavior. Fashioned by a patriarchal social order committed equally to the conflicting principles of polarity and harmony between the sexes, the Nazi melodrama instructs its audience on how women and men should relate to each other.

Male Conquest of the Female Continent: Veit Harlan's *Opfergang* (1944)

The only Nazi filmmaker ever brought to trial for crimes against humanity, Veit Harlan is best known for his virulently anti-semitic film *Jud Süß* (1940) and his ballad to total war *Kolberg* (1945). A star director in the Third Reich, Harlan was awarded the title "Professor," received some of the highest wages and most prestigious projects, and directed four of the first nine German full-length feature films in Agfa color. However, as Karsten Witte maintains, "Harlan's specific service to the Third Reich was his heavy melodramas . . . which together all seismographically reflect Nazi domestic and foreign policy developments."³⁰ Despite their exemplary nature, Harlan's melodramas have been largely overlooked by film historians. His melodrama *Opfergang* (Rite of Sacrifice, 1944) is a case in point and deserves more critical attention.³¹

The screenplay of *Opfergang*, written by Veit Harlan and Alfred Braun, is based loosely on Rudolf G. Binding's novella of the same name published in 1912. With its color film format and star cast including Kristina Söderbaum (Harlan's Swedish wife), Carl Raddatz, and Irene von Meyendorff, *Opfergang* was clearly conceived as a box office success but did not premiere until December 8, 1944, thirteen months after its completion. Harlan claimed that Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels held the film from the theaters for nearly a year because it mythologized adultery as sublime and emanated "Todeserotik."³² The eventual release of the film and its rating of "artistically especially valuable," however, testify to its general adherence to the dictates of fascist propaganda. Films produced during the peak war years were endowed with two primary functions, entertainment and education, which Goebbels maintained could not be divorced from politics:

Moreover, we do not want to ignore the fact that film as a great and deeply penetrating mass art must also serve as entertainment. But at a time in which the entire nation is burdened with such difficult hardships and worries, entertainment is mainly valuable politically. . . . Additionally, film in its modern development is a first-class educational medium for the nation.³³

Opfergang advances just such a political agenda in the guise of harmless diversion. This melodrama entertains the audience with an archetypal story of a love triangle, while educating the masses to maintain the sanctity of marriage and instrumentalize sexuality in the service of the state. Harlan's film charts the development of a married couple as they learn to overcome socially unacceptable behavior and adopt prescribed gender roles. This narrative development corresponds to a dominant strategy of Nazi entertainment films, whereby deviant behavior is played out only to be reigned in and overcome at the conclusion.³⁴ The pedagogical value of cinematic transgressions and their sublimation lies in their function as a cathartic release and redirection of desire cloaked in an innocuous vehicle, for as Goebbels argued, the best propaganda is invisible and conceals its true intentions.³⁵ Harlan's film conforms to Goebbels' dictate by veiling its ideological stance in entertainment. *Opfergang* engages in a discourse about masculinity centered on territorial domination and about femininity that rewards sacrifice, self-effacement, and service while punishing mobility, self-interest, and passion with death.³⁶

Typical of melodrama, the narrative is highly convoluted. Upon returning from a long sea voyage to his hometown of Hamburg, the world traveler Albrecht Froben (Carl Raddatz) marries his cousin Octavia (Irene von Meyendorff), a beautiful but extremely reserved young woman. Despite admonishments from his cousin Mathias (Franz Schafheitlin), Albrecht befriends his strange and adventurous neighbor Älskling Flodeen (Kristina Söderbaum), who rides with him daily through the countryside. In order to distance himself from Äls, Albrecht moves with his wife to Düsseldorf and tries to lose himself in business and parties. At the carnival ball, however, Octavia realizes that she cannot bear the wild, intoxicating festivities and longs for her quiet home on the Alster. The Frobens thus return to Hamburg and learn Äls is confined to her bed with the remnants of a tropical fever. Encouraged by Albrecht's daily greeting on horseback outside her window, Äls recovers and the two continue their rides together. Soon Äls admits: "My friend, we love each other, and it will end badly." She suffers a relapse just as typhus spreads through the harbor district, where her illegitimate daughter is staying with a governess. Albrecht saves the child but is infected himself. When Octavia hears Albrecht's feverish torment over Äls's deteriorating health, she resolves to don her husband's riding habit and perform the ritual greeting to his dying lover. Albrecht learns

of Octavia's self-sacrifice after Äls's death and finally recognizes his wife's great love. Reconciled, the couple rides along the seashore and bids one last farewell to Äls, whose ashes have been scattered among the waves.

The opening sequence positions Albrecht Froben as an accomplished world traveler with Viking blood, a respected member of an all-male group defined by mobility. After Hamburg has been established as the venue with an aerial shot of the Elbe River followed by shots of the harbor, scenic buildings, and the Bismarck monument, the scene shifts to a large paneled room filled with maritime artifacts. At the head of a rectangular table, where nearly twenty members of the German Colonial Union³⁷ are seated, a man stands next to a large globe and reports on Albrecht's travels to former German colonies in Africa and on to Japan. As a sign of their esteem, the group awards Albrecht "the entire world," the globe.

The strategic placement of colonialism at the beginning of the film, our entrance into the filmic text, suggests that *Opfergang* participates in a discourse of domination. Rudolf Binding's novella of 1912 contains no references to the pre-First-World-War German ambition of a middle-African empire stretching from Togo and Cameroon to German East Africa. Embedded in Harlan's film in the form of the German Colonial Union (a slightly veiled reference to the Reich Colonial Union³⁸) and transported into 1942–1944, colonialism carries striking significance. With its emphasis on geographical orientation and spatial conquest, the film seems to resonate anxieties aroused by the war and the quest for *Lebensraum*. Yet, despite its contemporary setting, *Opfergang* is devoid of any overt references to the war in North Africa, Europe, or Asia.³⁹ The lack of historical specificity invites an allegorical reading of colonialism. *Opfergang* conflates masculinity with exploration and conquest, and femininity with stability of the soil. Herein lies both a central metaphor of the film and a fundamental aspect of fascist mythology. Land and woman stand as interchangeable elements, objects to be subdued by male drives of domination and movement.

This reading is supported in the second sequence. As the camera focuses on the globe and the shot dissolves into the next scene, Albrecht points to the countries of his travels and displays to his cousin Mathias three treasures: a warrior statue, an eleven-headed Kuan-yin,⁴⁰ the Goddess of Mercy that Albrecht mistakes for a Buddha, and a kimono. While Mathias admires the Kuan-yin, Albrecht seductively dons the kimono and boasts of his sexual exploits until he rests upon a portrait of Octavia. At the same time Mathias protests: "Albrecht, Albrecht, you are now a famous, dignified man. You can no longer afford such stories. You are bound by your position."⁴¹

Albrecht's souvenirs and the geography of his travels can be read as the representative elements in the dangerous conquest of the "dark continent." These objects and spaces stand in for the three main characters and embody their essence, foreshadowing the conflicts ahead. The male warrior figure

symbolizes Albrecht, a mighty conqueror who defies the boundaries of political division to re-capture the colonial ideal. The Kuan-yin, the unrecognized Goddess of Mercy, exemplifies Octavia, who patiently forgives her husband for his adultery while he fails to see her virtue and selfless love. The alluring kimono and unexplored regions of Asia and Africa represent Äls, the sexual threat inherent in the erotic realm of forbidden pleasure or, in Freudian terms, the dark continent of enigmatic female desire.⁴²

In the masculine battle for the colonization of woman, virtue and desire stand for the oppositional feminine components of stability and dissolution. This dual vision of femininity is represented in the “heavenly” Octavia and the “earthly” Äls, who are never captured in the same frame.⁴³ Albrecht mediates between the two women and functions as a catalyst for change, compelling Octavia to integrate aspects of Äls’s personality into her own.

Octavia first appears as an objectified framed icon; she is, like her painted image, a constant (“She is what she always was.”).⁴⁴ Timeless and motionless, Octavia’s portrait retards Albrecht’s movement and contains his sexual desires, defined by Mathias as socially unacceptable. When she appears before Albrecht descending the stairs in a flowing white gown to greet him, Octavia literally embodies the lofty realm of ideal femininity, which must descend from its pedestal to meet the rugged earthbound male. Indeed, the original visual stability of her portrait and the subsequent movement of her body mirror Octavia’s development within the filmic narrative from an unapproachable angel to a corporeal wife. Initially staged as stationary, seated, or moving slowly, Octavia only begins to move quickly when her relationship with Albrecht is threatened by her physical passivity. Despite her inhibitions, for example, Octavia glides down the giant carnival slide, and when Albrecht cannot divert his attention from Äls, Octavia runs after her in search of the key to her rival’s magnetism. In the ultimate self-sacrifice, she adopts Albrecht’s persona and rides his horse past Äls’s window to comfort her husband’s dying mistress. Octavia’s development is complete in the final scene, when she joins her husband on horseback along the seashore. Each movement brings her closer to a vital physicality that will satisfy her husband’s desires.

Octavia is a beautiful, artistic, and somewhat fragile woman bound to her family’s dimly lit drawing room, her gleaming white music room, or the garden of her family’s estate. Playing the piano is her entire life, an activity that “signals harmony, cultural refinement and the restriction of women to the domestic sphere.”⁴⁵ Octavia’s artificial environment, and by analogy the homeland, is associated with extreme intellectualism and pending death. The Froben estate is filled with reminders of transitoriness and mortality. The grandfather clock, inscribed with the adage “One of these hours will be your last,” dominates the scene.⁴⁶ Likewise, the table clock in Octavia’s room holds a central position in the middle of the frame, suggesting the overwhelming sense of life’s brevity.

This morbid preoccupation with death culminates at the Froben family gathering. The scene opens on a close-up of orchids on the drawing room table. These tropical flowers are later featured prominently in Äls and Albrecht's sick rooms, creating a link between the extremes of the mind and body. Octavia plays Chopin's nocturnes in a dark room filled with heavy furniture and filtered light, while her father recites Nietzsche's "Todesahnung" from the *Dionysos-Dithyramben* cycle, "The Sun Sinks." Albrecht is deeply disturbed by the changes in Hamburg since his departure three years earlier. Especially bothered by the emphasis on death, he opens the door to reveal the sunlight and thus asserts the life-affirming value of nature: "wind and waves, the glow and pleasure of the sun."⁴⁷ The parallels to Germany in the later stages of the war are clear. As a counter to the pervasive obsession with death resulting from crushing military defeats, the film offers sports and nature as a refuge.

Albrecht exhibits many of the attributes of the ideal fascist male: he is an explorer, active, mobile, and most at home outdoors. While his world travels function as an initiation rite, his road to manhood has just begun. He cannot remain an aimless, restless wanderer, and Octavia activates his return to *Heimat*, the family estate. Although Albrecht becomes anchored in the homeland, he never seems to have a space of his own. While the Froben coat of arms adorns the estate windows and model ship, confirming his membership in the family "empire," Albrecht is always in someone else's space. In contrast to both Octavia and Äls, who inherit large estates, Albrecht has no land of his own. Even his cousin Mathias has a study filled with the relics of the East and, ironically, Albrecht's globe. Far from being alienated, Albrecht dominates indoor space and makes it his own by his sheer presence. An energetic, strong man without his own clearly defined territory, Albrecht embodies the fascist male who needs *Lebensraum* and embraces the Nazi policy of territorial expansion. His situation also illustrates that when a man has no land (read woman) to control, he cannot control himself.

Like Octavia, who must learn to become more physical, sensuous, and active, Albrecht must also change the direction of his life. He must learn to tame his reckless behavior and carnal passions and redirect his libidinal energy toward his wife. His development within the film's narrative consists of recognizing Octavia's virtues and controlling his unproductive sexuality. Albrecht's journey towards social integration is endangered by the erotic woman.

Älsklings Flodeen's initial appearance establishes her mythic identity as a water nixie; the audience only glimpses her hands, arms, legs, and blond hair as she grasps onto Albrecht's boat. With her fragmented physicality, Äls is the epitome of the mobile woman defined by a "free lifestyle." Without a definitive homeland (Octavia thinks Äls is from Finland) or even a real name (Älsklings was a nickname given to her by her mother), Äls is described as a migratory bird, who travels south in the winter as far as Africa. Her unrestrained lifestyle is inimical to the ideal of the Aryan woman.

Äls negates several essential features of National Socialist ideology. She does not conform to Nazi standards on racial purity, the health of the national body, and the sanctity of motherhood. To begin with, although Äls is outwardly the model of the Aryan woman with her blond hair, blue eyes, and athletic body, she is marked a foreigner of uncertain origins. Her foreignness is emphasized by the fact that Albrecht, Octavia, and Mathias are cousins, blood relatives who share the same name, family estate, and homeland. The question of Äls's racial value in Nazi terms is ultimately linked to her state of health. As she swims, rides, and practices archery accompanied by nearly twenty hounds, Äls appears to be the picture of health. Likewise, her home, filled with plants, parrots, and hounds, reflects the external vitality so characteristic of her being. But Äls suffers from the remnants of a tropical fever and has inherited poor health from her mother, who spent her life in hospitals and vegetated long before she died. Äls shares a fatal connection with her mother.⁴⁸ Both women are described as "foolhardy," "frivolous," and especially "irrational." Moreover, their diseased bodies prevent them from being good mothers and caring for their daughters, and as the governess concludes: "A sick mother? . . . The child suffers the most from that."⁴⁹ The repeated comparisons between Äls and her deceased mother reflect Nazi concepts of racial hygiene and biological determinism. The diseased female body is passed down from generation to generation and threatens the health of the national body. Even Äls's daughter Susanne is a danger; although she is not infected with typhus, she passes the disease onto Albrecht.⁵⁰

Along with her illness, Äls's mobility and self-interested desire to live to the fullest define her as a poor mother. In response to her pleas to let Susanne live with her, the governess replies: "There would be absolutely no sense in that. You are hardly here, then you close the house up again and move to the south or to the north and then the child has to leave again. That is not good for a child. Or do you want to drag it along everywhere? A child must have an ordered life."⁵¹

Although Äls's status as an unwed mother might suggest a violation of conventional morality, according to Nazi family policy her physical inability and reluctance to care for her child are a more formidable offense.⁵² Äls's "abnormality" is again written on her body. The film draws a clear connection between femininity and pain in a scene with Äls and her doctor. The doctor characterizes pain and suffering as positive because, as a warning signal, they protect the body from serious injury. Äls, however, does not perceive pain. Herein lies her ultimate transgression against the fascist concept of femininity. Adolf Hitler's formulation of male and female duties can serve as an example of how National Socialism encodes woman:

What a man sacrifices in the struggle of his people, a woman sacrifices in the struggle for the preservation of this people in the individual cases.

What the man employs in heroic courage on the battlefield, the woman employs in eternal, patient devotion, in eternal, patient suffering and endurance. Every child that she brings into the world is a battle that she wins for the existence or nonexistence of her people.⁵³

Defined in the metaphors of battle, woman's essential nature is to bear children, maintain the nuclear family, and suffer pain silently. Äls does not conform to these expectations; pain is alien to her being, and she fails to fulfill her maternal duties.

Whereas Äls and Albrecht are both associated with water — Harlan's recurring symbol of fluidity, passion, boundlessness, and mobility — they negotiate water differently. Äls is inscribed as a siren; a temptress who emerges from the sea and ultimately merges with it as her ashes are scattered among the waves. Äls relates to water physically, in that she becomes the sea itself on both a visual and narrative level.⁵⁴ Albrecht, by contrast, masters the seas as he sails across the globe, just as he masters land that does not belong to him. This dominion is endangered by his relationship to Äls, illustrated by the fact that sailing was his favorite sport until he met her. Thereafter, he no longer commands the waters.

The *Faschingsball* sequence in *Opfergang* provides the main characters with an opportunity to subvert fascist stereotypes, if only momentarily.⁵⁵ As a central metaphor in Weimar cinema for unlimited sensual and social possibilities, the carnival is a relatively rare event in Nazi films.⁵⁶ The carnival, as defined by Mikhail Bakhtin, is the freedom that comes from inverting the social hierarchy, suspending moral conventions, and masquerading in new roles. Unlike ritual, which is created and practiced by the elite, "Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people." Bakhtin continues: "It is the people as a whole, but organized in their own way . . . It is outside of and contrary to all existing forms of the coercive socioeconomic and political organization, which is suspended for the time of the festivity."⁵⁷ The carnival functions as a safety valve. It gives voice to an alternative conception of reality within a controlled framework. By allowing difference to be played out and affording potentially destructive desires a limited release, the carnival averts any real threat to the system.

In Harlan's film the subversive quality of the carnival is directed towards new sexual identities, which ultimately reaffirm the institution of marriage. Wearing a red mask and black cape lined in red reminiscent of his red kimono and situated in the realm of unacceptable eroticism, Albrecht pursues two blond women dressed like Äls in black riding habit, black top hat, mask and veil covering their faces. The erotic woman is doubled in an optical encoding of her underling enigma and then fetishized in the mask and veil, which function "to visualize (and hence stabilize) the instability, the precariousness of sexuality."⁵⁸

True to the carnivalesque principle, however, this image of woman proves to be false. A fade-in of Äls seated at her desk, dressed in a modest white nightgown, writing in her diary of how she must remain silent about her love for Albrecht, calls the cinematic inscription of the erotic woman into question. Not only is Äls not present at the festivities, she is determined to uphold the sanctity of marriage and renounce her passion. In a similar manner, for the duration of the carnival Octavia seems willing to adopt a more sensual persona to match her golden mask and white dress. Indeed, at the carnival the two women begin to play with roles foreign to their character — in effect they exchange roles in the masquerade. Äls adopts the modesty, virtue, and corresponding physical passivity long associated with Octavia, while Octavia embraces Äls's vitality, sensuality, and movement.

In an attempt to assume Äls's energetic persona, Octavia agrees to go down the giant mouth slide with Albrecht but is soon upset by his public display of passion. When she is voted the winner in the Triumph of Beauty contest and captured by the throngs, Octavia screams, struggles free, and runs away. The scene denotes the symbolic rape of Octavia: alone in a taxi, her mask gone, tears streaming down her face, Octavia is engulfed in a dark red velvet cape covering her white dress resembling a wedding gown. Albrecht is titillated by his wife's pain and humiliation and gleefully reveals: "She screamed bloody murder."⁵⁹ The marriage has been consummated.



Female desire as sickness: *Opfergang*.

Whereas Octavia is associated with death on an intellectual level, Äls is preoccupied with her own death: "One is always near him — Death. And its really quite good, if one smiles a little once in a while and says: you are my friend. You come when I cannot go on any longer."⁶⁰ Äls's death scene reveals the nexus of excessive female physicality, unbridled passion, and erotic death. The audience witnesses Äls dying on her sumptuous bed in a medium shot. With her hair tousled, dressed in a negligee, her right shoulder and much of her chest exposed, Äls radiates the fever engulfing her life force. The filmic strategies in *Opfergang* correspond to the trope Mary Ann Doane has found in American women's films of the 1940s: uncontained female sexuality and desires are externalized as a fever that consumes the woman and leads to her death.⁶¹ Äls's disease also resonates fascist ideas on female desire. Both Albrecht and Äls travel to the tropics, but he returns as the mighty conquering hero integrated into society through male bonding and marriage. She, by contrast, is punished with the remnants of a tropical fever for venturing into places culturally forbidden to woman. The fever that consumes Äls is gender specific. The disease inscribed on her body is related to her mother's ill health and becomes a hereditary trait transmitted from one infected female to the next. Although Albrecht also suffers a fever from typhus, he recovers in direct opposition to the conclusion of Binding's novella. According to Harlan, it was Goebbels who insisted on changing the end of the film: "The woman guilty of adultery has to die, not the husband. The marriage must remain intact. Besides, this would be better in a pedagogical sense not only for the front but also for the homeland."⁶² In the fascist state, the erotic woman must die, so that the marriage can survive.

The focus on voyeurism, exhibitionism, and spectacle in Äls's death scene illuminates a characteristic function of the erotic woman in Nazi cinema. Äls's bed is moved to the window so that she can see Albrecht and be seen by him. Woman, encoded as the specular object of male desire, is ironically situated in the role of spectator but deprived of agency and control. Her body motivates the spectacle, but her entrance into the system likewise triggers the containment, physical punishment, and elimination of the female body. Without a body to act out her passion, Äls's look is disengaging; all that remains is the desire of the gaze.

The parallel montage, whereby both Albrecht and Äls lie in their separate beds engulfed by fever, illustrates the opposing consequences of male and female adultery in Nazi cinema. The soft lighting, choral music, and intimate camera work intent on highlighting the romantic aspects of death culminate in a close-up of Äls's disembodied face. Divested of the erotic, her body is literally eliminated by the clouds, waves, and lighting. She is contained in a collage composition, where her de-eroticized face is superimposed onto her garden gate and the roaring waves behind it, while Albrecht, in a medium shot (significantly capturing his torso), occupies the left corner of the frame. When the gate

opens and the water rushes into the garden, her face disappears in a fade-out. Äls and the passion she represents are completely extinguished. She becomes the ocean, a flowing space for man to dominate.

The fascist melodrama, rather than directed exclusively at a female audience (Goebbels's insistence on script changes based on their presumed effect on soldiers at the front, should suffice to question this long-held premise), aestheticizes female sacrifice. As the restless embodiment of unbridled passion, the non-conforming woman poses a danger to the warrior male and is cinematically contained in the *image* of pain. Äls, the woman who cannot perceive pain internally, ironically becomes the vehicle for rendering pain visible. Female suffering, rather than portrayed as a "reality," is externalized as an image and becomes an overriding aesthetic principle.⁶³ The act of violence waged against a female body defined as inferior, her erasure from the picture, is rendered beautifully to elicit aesthetic pleasure rather than moral outrage.

The staging of female death in *Opfergang* is typical of how many fascist films deal with a woman whose sexuality is outside the confines of the nuclear family. Äls is condemned to death for her transgressive sexuality. More significant than her adultery is her role as an erotic mother, a mother who fails to raise her own child, who has no husband, and who risks her own health for sensual pleasures while endangering the life of her child. Äls shares much with the figure Hanna from *Ich klage an!* (I Accuse!, Wolfgang Liebeneiner, 1941), a film designed to gain approval for the "Aktion T-4" euthanasia program. Both films present an idealized version of female death from disease. By mapping the deterioration of two protagonists who begin as vibrant young women and turn into bedridden invalids, the filmmakers present death as a solution to suffering that is merciful and readily embraced. When Äls lies in Albrecht's arms, she purrs contentedly, "To die like this would be the most beautiful death!" Likewise, after Hanna's husband has given her poison instead of medicine, she sighs, "I feel so light, so happy, like never before. I wish it were death." What Karl Ludwig Rost writes of Hanna applies to Äls as well: "It is not the fear of death but the fear of dying alone without the beloved husband that appears to be the true horror."⁶⁴

Although much has been written on the glorification of death and aestheticizing of violence in Nazi culture,⁶⁵ the gender issues involved in staging death remain relatively unexplored. Male death, epitomized in films ranging from *Hitlerjunge Quex* (Hitler Youth Quex, 1933) to *Wunschkonzert* (Request Concert, 1940), is most often a heroic act of sacrifice for the good of the community and the fatherland. Young Heini Völker in *Hitlerjunge Quex*, for example, is murdered by the Communists and dies in his comrades' arms with the words of the official Hitler Youth Song on his lips. Heini becomes immortalized as the swastika is superimposed on his dead body and replaced by columns of marching Hitler Youths. Romanticized male death is usually violent but quick and apparently painless (since the man is nearly anesthe-

tized by visions of grandeur), often taking place offscreen. There are few examples of men dying from diseases, but when figures such as Fritz von Hartwig in *Robert Koch* (1939) and Professor Achenbach in *Germanin* (1943) die from tuberculosis and sleeping sickness, their deaths are meaningful because they help find cures for these deadly diseases.⁶⁶

Saul Friedländer has noted that Nazism presents “not real death in its everyday horror and tragic banality, but a ritualized, stylized, and aestheticized death.”⁶⁷ A contemporary critic of *Opfergang* recognized the “decorative” function of female death:

The impetuosity of wanting to die young, to ride as an elegant bride of the wind on the waves and to hunt on the back of a horse, the unbridled, feverish, life addiction is expressed very effectively by Kristina Söderbaum. She knows how to die with decorative grace.⁶⁸

Due to her diseased body and aberrant maternal role, Äls cannot contribute to society and her death therefore corresponds to the Nazi euthanasia measures prescribed for “inferior” people. Beyond this, Äls’s demise also fulfills a significant propaganda function in the waning years of the war. Her personification of Death as a long awaited and helpful friend diminishes the horror of real death.

With the elimination of the femme fatale, the remaining femme fragile must be transformed into a vibrant woman for the picture to be complete.⁶⁹ Octavia, characterized by self-effacement and renunciation of her own desires, manifests many of the pivotal components of the model fascist woman. When Albrecht is disturbed by her family’s bourgeois intellectualism, she consoles him: “But later we can do what we want, or rather what you want, Albrecht.” In a similar vein, when Mathias asks how she is, Octavia replies: “I am as happy as Albrecht is.”⁷⁰ Octavia’s identity and sense of purpose are determined by her relation to her husband and thus she corresponds to Hitler’s dictate: “The world of woman is man. She only thinks about other things now and then.”⁷¹ But Octavia, “in her cool, refined beauty, in her nobility, calmness, and inattentively measured deportment,”⁷² is unapproachable. In order to adopt the masquerade of vitality initiated at the carnival and integrate it completely into her personality, Octavia must again disguise herself. She now dons Albrecht’s riding habit and trots past Äls’s window, participating for the first time in the ritual shared by her husband and his lover. Dressed in her husband’s clothing and performing his ceremonial greeting, Octavia is vitalized in masculine terms or in the guise of masculinity. Octavia, who at the beginning of the film is characterized as distant and effete, successfully transforms herself by adopting Äls’s sensuality and Albrecht’s vigor. The emancipatory potential of the carnival is united with the stabilizing function of ritual to create a unified image of woman in Octavia.

In the final scene of the film, Octavia and Albrecht embody the ideal married couple as they slowly ride horses along the seashore. Both partners have had to sacrifice a part of their former selves. Octavia has abandoned her restraint and exhibits a new vigor. Albrecht has recovered from his sexual fever and shows self-constraint. Having gone from a gallop to a trot, Albrecht has literally bridled his passion. The couple has not only found a balanced pace on horseback, the arm's length between them has been overcome as they shake hands. Their acceptance of prescribed social roles is symbolized in their handshake, a pact to build a common future together.

Opfergang advances a concept of gender difference and social integration consistent with Nazi ideology in general. Any threat to the stability of the nuclear family is neutralized. Äls is eliminated from the picture because she poses a danger to the domestic order with her assertion of female desire and subjectivity. Octavia, by contrast, proves herself a good wife by conforming to her husband's desires and sacrificing self-identity. Albrecht in turn abandons his quest for forbidden pleasure, reaffirms his commitment to marriage, and conquers himself by taming his own drives. *Opfergang* inscribes gender identities that accommodate and propagate the government's stance regarding motherhood, the family, racial purity, euthanasia, sacrifice, and dominance.

Identity of the Mother Confirmed by the Language and Law of the Father in *Damals* (1943)

The Swedish actress Zarah Leander was brought to Germany in 1937 under contract with Ufa, Germany's largest film studio, in the hope that she could fill the gap in German film left by the departure of Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich.⁷³ In the grand tradition of the studio contract system, Ufa created a star image for Leander. Cast most often in the role of the ostensible femme fatale who suffers unbearable pain due to her subversive desires but in the end is vindicated as proper and respectable, Leander masquerades in dual roles. Her celluloid figure engages in non-domestic female occupations: she is a nightclub singer, revue star, or chanteuse, who has the liberty to be different and frequent the exotic and erotic. Featured as a foreigner from Great Britain, Sweden, Hungary, Russia, or Denmark who travels to all the corners of the world, she stands outside conventional norms. Her figure is marked not only by a deep, almost male voice, strong willed nature, and sexual activity, but also by her freedom of movement and function as spectacle. This independent, sensual woman is nearly always constituted as a deviance and danger to the moral order, but surprisingly is rewarded with a husband at the end of the film.⁷⁴

The melodrama *Damals* (Back Then) best illustrates Zarah Leander's masquerade as the good girl everyone thinks is a bad girl. Her last film in the Third Reich, *Damals* was directed by Rolf Hansen and received the rating "artistically

valuable.” The premiere on March 3, 1943, was an overwhelming success, marred only by the fact that during the evening Berlin experienced its most severe bombing raid to date. Six weeks after the premiere, Leander left Germany, and the film was taken out of distribution.⁷⁵ Despite its short theatrical run, *Damals* was included in an unpublished list from November 13, 1944, of the most successful films produced in Nazi Germany.⁷⁶

Damals engages in a popular discourse of disjunctive female identity brought into focus by the authority of language and law. Two opposing images of woman are anchored in the main protagonist Vera Meiners (alias Dr. Gloria O’Conner). The identity of this woman vacillates between a selfless mother and a deceitful, suspected murderess. This opposition represents an allegorical conflict between conformity and degeneracy based on the strict polarity between masculinity and femininity. The ideological work of the film is to criminalize female transgression against male authority while rewarding the suffering and sacrifice of “true” motherhood with the security of the nuclear family. Concurrently, the film assures the survival of the family by demanding that the father eventually acknowledge the value of motherhood. Woman’s relation to law and language is characterized by deception and impotence. The male representatives of the law and social hierarchy narrate the complex, non-linear story, achieve narrative closure, administer justice, and restore order on both the narrative and social levels.

The film begins in South America, where Dr. Gloria O’Conner (Zarah Leander) is arrested for the murder of Frank Douglas (Karl Martell). When the authorities learn that Dr. O’Conner died at a quarantine station in Las Casas, the prisoner refuses to speak, even to reveal her true name, Vera Meiners. Seeking information on this unknown woman, District Attorney Mendoza publishes her photograph and arrest warrant in newspapers all over the world. Vera’s story begins to unfold in a series of four flashbacks as friends and colleagues contact Mendoza with details about her past. In 1920s Lübeck, Vera lives happily with her husband, the attorney Jan Meiners (Hans Stüwe) and their two-year-old daughter Eva until she receives a letter from her former boyfriend Frank Douglas. Fearing her husband’s jealousy, she secretly meets Douglas in Hamburg to end their relationship definitively. When Jan learns that Vera has lied to him about her clandestine rendezvous, he divorces her. Rebuilding her life in Switzerland, Vera becomes a doctor but is dismissed from her position for having performed an operation against the explicit orders of the hospital director, Professor Rigaud. Without economic means and deprived of her medical license, Vera becomes a variety singer in Lisbon and falls in love with the clown Pablo (Rossano Brazzi). Just as she is about to find some personal happiness, Frank Douglas appears again. He secures her a job as a nurse in South America, where she can be with her daughter, who has spent years in a boarding school. Vera renounces her love for Pablo through deceit in order to fulfill her maternal duties. At the quarantine station in Las Casas, Vera meets Dr. Gloria O’Conner, who is dying from typhus. Despite the violent protests

of her fellow travelers, Vera informs the authorities about the infectious disease and is placed under stricter quarantine, thereby losing her nursing position. After months of unemployment, she assumes the identity of the deceased Dr. O'Conner and begins to practice medicine again. Returning to the present time frame, Jan Meiners arrives in South America to regain custody of his daughter. Jan discovers Vera has accepted imprisonment to protect Eva, who is likewise innocent of murder but equally guilty of poor judgment. The womanizer Frank Douglas was murdered by the father of a young woman who committed suicide after Douglas had seduced and abandoned her. At the conclusion, Vera is exonerated of murder, released from prison, and reunited with her daughter and former husband.

Damals contains all the elements of a successful filmscript that springs the boundaries of any single genre. It is a melodrama of a wife's defiance, a husband's jealousy, and the depths to which their bad judgment lead. It is also a crime story of murder, false imprisonment, and suicide. With its musical numbers by Zarah Leander and locales ranging from a bourgeois living room to a nightclub, from Lübeck to Lisbon and Las Casas, *Damals* was a calculated hit.

The film opens with the typical elements of the 1940s film noir or crime film. In a nightclub, a band plays a Latin American melody while a crowd forms on the dance floor. The rhythmic music follows the action to a hotel corridor as a woman wearing a black sequined dress with a lizard brooch on her lapel steals out of a hotel room and disappears into the rain-drenched night. Sailors come out of a dusty bar, a bus passes by, and the mysterious woman kicks the hotel key down the sewer just as a foghorn screeches and the sound of screaming crowds is heard. She enters the bar cast in the moving shadows of an overhead fan. Not reacting to the fact that the bar is closed, she orders an espresso in a deep voice and writes "Everything in order" on a note. Before her drink arrives, the elusive woman has vanished without a trace. The scene cuts to the same hotel room where a man is found shot to death.

The initial sequence sets the stage for the audience to understand the main protagonist as a criminal. The chiaroscuro lighting effects, "degenerate" music, exotic locations on the margin of proper society, and a murder all work to define Vera as deviant. The South American venue displaces the crime from any specifically German context and from self-directed social criticism. Travel to the exotic realm, as Siegfried Kracauer maintains, can serve as an escape from examining one's own social ills:

Travel is one of the great possibilities of society to keep itself in a permanent state of absentmindedness, which protects it from a confrontation with itself. It helps imagination onto the wrong paths, it covers up the view with impressions, it contributes to the glories of the world so that

its ugliness is not noticed. (The increase in world knowledge it brings serves to transfigure the existing system in which it was acquired.)⁷⁷

These unfamiliar images build on cultural constructs of National Socialism that posit the exotic as deadly. The beautiful and mysterious woman who inhabits this space, who frequents hotels, bars, and the harbor district at night, is likewise codified as a threat to normalcy and order. The dark imagery of crime is necessary for the audience's misrecognition of Vera as a murderer.

Vera's criminal status is reconfirmed when it becomes evident she has repeatedly lied to the district attorney and adopted a false identity. The *mise en scène* contributes to a definition of Vera as aberrant. The interrogation room with its honeycombed ceiling, venetian blinds, ceiling-level windows, fans, and sharp lighting contrasts that cast barred shadows on the walls visually imprison this strange woman. Vera, her body partially hidden in the shadows, thus suggesting the partial truths she espouses, obviously lies in her first interrogation. Her claim that she was never at the hotel contradicts what the audience has just witnessed. Confronted with evidence of her lies and false identity, Vera refuses to participate in the legal proceedings. Brought to her prison cell, she passes a woman screaming to be released from this insane asylum while another woman smokes, bares her legs, and plays a screeching blues song.⁷⁸ Grouped together with women who are portrayed as crazy and degenerate, Vera is located among the asocial.

According to the Reich and Prussian Ministry of the Interior in 1937: "Those to be considered asocial are persons who demonstrate through behavior towards the community, which may not in itself be criminal, that they will not adapt themselves to the community."⁷⁹ Individuals who deviate from prescribed social and sexual norms (alcoholics, prostitutes, the physically and mentally handicapped), and those who are "particularly unproductive and unrestrained, and who in the absence of a sense of responsibility do not conduct orderly domestic lives or raise their children to be useful racial comrades" were designated asocials.⁸⁰ "In the Nazis's view of the world, 'asocial' and criminal behavior was not determined by either individual choice or social environment, but was innate, and hence heritable."⁸¹ Based on the genetic threat to the nation, criminal biologists demanded the exclusion of asocials and criminals from the community through preventative custody (*Vorbeugungshaft*), forced labor, or internment in concentration camps where they were marked with black triangles. More women than men were accused of asocial behavior and "social feeble-mindedness," which often resulted in sterilization and inclusion in the euthanasia program.⁸² Set within this discursive context, *Damals* posits aberrant femininity as a crime.

Vera appears as both a mysterious, lying, accused murderess and as a dedicated doctor who cares for her patients above everything. Before she is brought in for questioning, Vera is shown tending to her patients, combating

not only disease but also the incompetence of her assistant. This dual image of Vera, the healer who devotes her life to others versus the asocial woman who transgresses moral and legal conventions, becomes the focus of the four flashbacks. These inner stories show how Vera's life is nearly destroyed each time she lies and defies male authority. The narrative works as much to determine the conclusive identity of this woman as to prove her guilt. Indeed, the film questions the extent to which her *being* is the criminal offense. Vera's disjunctive identity is based on her adherence to two opposing codes, the motherhood principle based on compassion, self-sacrifice, and devotion to others, and the fatherhood principle based on law, authority, and order. The first two flashbacks record the consequences of Vera's asocial behavior, namely her refusal to conform to patriarchal standards. The second two flashbacks illustrate how Vera's sense of compassion is eventually tempered by obedience to a higher order.

The first flashback to Lübeck establishes Vera's former idyllic status as a beloved wife and mother and a respected member of the community. The Meiners's spacious and elegant living room filled with well-dressed guests signals the economic security and prominent social status of the happy couple. Dressed in a modest black evening gown with a white lace collar and sleeves, a rose at her breast, her hair in tight curls, and lighted from above giving her a slight halo effect, Vera exudes contented domesticity. Surrounded by her husband and admiring guests, she is located at the center of the frame and becomes the focus of everyone's attention. Seated at the piano, her body conspicuously hidden, she sings a soft, slow lullaby, while looking up admiringly at her husband:

Tonight, when the Night quiet and fine
steps into my room here,
I wrap myself up in her coat
and say pleadingly to her:
Dear Night, come, let me say to you,
what I wish from the heart.
No clock shall strike today
and time shall stand still,
and the world will not breathe!
When he holds me in his arms!⁸³

Vera's song redefines the night in the context of socially sanctioned environs and institutions. The night, first introduced as a threat, a time of murder and intrigue in some distant land, becomes a blanket of security in the protective domain of the German family. The prosperity, security, and social integration linked to marriage, however, come at the expense of a woman's career and

public life. Far from illustrating merely the private realm, the Meiners's home has become a public forum where the status of woman is debated:

- WOMAN GUEST: You men are such egoists. Say, why don't you let her become a singer?
- JAN: That would be the last straw. I am happy that she didn't become a doctor.
- DR. PETERSEN: Exactly. That's the way life goes. Finally God invents a creature who possesses every good talent. She can do something. She studies medicine, and besides that has a splendid voice, looks wonderful. And what happens? She falls in love with our good Meiners.
- JAN: Hey, you.
- DR. PETERSEN: Who is surely my best friend, but overnight, so to speak, all career plans are botched, and she's just a wife.
- VERA: Just? Can one be even more?
- WOMAN GUEST: No, not when you're happy.
- VERA: I'm happy!⁸⁴

Vera's identity centers on the ambiguous term *Frau*, denoting both wife and woman. Her acceptance of a self-definition that links a woman's social being to her biological functions necessitates that she relinquish a public role as doctor or singer in favor of a "natural" role as wife and mother. Conforming to her husband's vision of an ideal woman, Vera devotes her god-given talents to heal, nurture, and entertain her family and circle of friends. Meiner's insistence that his wife eschew an independent role in the limelight is deemed correct because both the women present concur that if a wife-woman is happy then that is all the identity she needs. The debate about female autonomy becomes superfluous when their adorable daughter Eva appears. All attention is directed to the child. As Vera lifts her to her lap, Jan bends down, and they form a tableau of the model family.

Vera endangers her idyllic home life by meeting Frank Douglas in Hamburg without her husband's knowledge. Although it is clear that Vera is a faithful wife and had rejected Frank long ago because he was not a suitable marriage partner, her reckless independence contributes to the dissolution of her marriage. She ventures away from home, defies her husband's authority, and lies to him. Jan learns of her deceit when the train to Copenhagen that she was supposed to be traveling on derails, a less than subtle visual image of male rage and impotency. Vera is punished for her transgression with banishment from paradise. Jan divorces her.

The flashback to Switzerland reveals how the contradictory nature of Vera's personality leads to disaster. She is shown to be a dedicated doctor

who risks her professional life for the welfare of a young patient. Her compassion for others, however, is at variance with the established order.

Upon examining the young Paulette Gaspard, Professor Rigaud declares that nothing can be done at the moment since the girl's heart cannot withstand surgery. Vera breaks the news to the child's mother, Mrs. Gaspard, who appeals to Vera for help based on a "natural" bond between women, their common struggle to aid a child in need: "Doctor, you have to help me. The professor is certainly a good doctor, but he is only a man. What does such a man know about a mother, even if he's well educated. Even if he's a father. You're a woman. You must understand that. You can't simply say to me, your child's lost. We can't do anything."⁸⁵

Corresponding to the popular sentiment in Nazi rhetoric that "being a woman means being a mother," the two women are defined by their shared motherly instinct.⁸⁶ The solidarity among women established in the dialogue correlates visually as the identities of the two women merge optically. When Vera dresses for surgery, her face is superimposed onto Mrs. Gaspard's face in a dissolve establishing a clear affinity between the two women. Featured often as comrades, photographed in the same frame, side by side in a medium shot, Vera and Mrs. Gaspard face their common destiny together.



Women as caregivers: *Damals*.

The impassioned plea of a mother to save her daughter leads Vera to lie and disobey the professor's orders. Surrounded by a glass encasement with latticework resembling a barred cage, the child's mother on the one side, the invisible professor on the telephone occupying the other trajectory, Vera is literally caught between her passive role in the patriarchal order and the dictates of motherhood. The insignificance of women in the male order is confirmed when Professor Rigaud and his male colleague Dr. Lugeon revive the child to health and restore order. Vera then remarks to Mrs. Gaspard: "Now we are both completely superfluous here."⁸⁷

The deadly consequences of self-assertion and disobedience are made clear by the head nurse, who remarks: "Where would we be, if every young doctor meddled with the treatment of his supervisor . . . if he did exactly the opposite of what was strictly ordered? Patients in the hospital would no longer be certain about their life."⁸⁸ Vera's transgression against male authority no longer affects merely the health of her immediate family as in Lübeck; her defiance now threatens the health of the entire community.

When asked why she risked her career and the patient's life, Vera shows a picture of herself with her daughter and harkens back to the motherhood principle: "Don't you understand that I would do whatever it took to save a child for its mother."⁸⁹ Vera's profound sense of motherly duty and selfless actions, while framed in a positive light, are abated by her misguided autonomy and sedition. The value of motherliness is juxtaposed to the law of the father. Although self-sacrifice is deemed an essential quality, one must conform to an established structure under the proper guidance of a "genuine" leader. Since Vera does not submit to the hierarchical system of power, she is again punished with banishment. She is fired and her medical license is revoked.

The flashback to Lisbon shifts the struggle in Vera's life to the level of personal desires versus motherly responsibility. The action begins in a crowded Lisbon nightclub where Vera is engaged as a singer. Her first performance suggests that she has adopted a new, more passionate identity. Her costume, song, gestures, and especially the staging of the gaze all contribute to the portrayal of an erotic woman within acceptable limits.

Vera is photographed alone on an elevated circular stage, the center of attention but disengaged from the protective realm of the *Volksgemeinschaft* she experienced in Lübeck. She is now an eroticized woman on display, surrounded by a demanding public audience. Dressed in a low cut, floor-length black gown with a mantilla, veil, huge dangling earrings, and a tam-bourine in her hand, and thus properly marked as foreign, she sings of her romantic longings:

Who knows what secretly moves a woman's heart,
for whom it blazes afire?
Suddenly, you feel that it beats ardently for you

when it blissfully admits to you:
 I can't say what I like about you so much.
 Is it your laugh, your gaze?
 I don't know, whether it's intoxication
 or love that holds me,
 I only feel — you would be my happiness . . .
 I could love someone like you,
 gentle but full of ardor;
 to belong to someone like you completely
 and to swear to him a thousand vows!
 I could love someone like you
 how good my heart would be for him . . .
 I would like to give to someone like you
 my soul and my life!
 He will be everything for me,
 my sun, my happiness, my world!⁹⁰

Vera's performance begins with a long shot of her on stage surrounded by viewers seated at tables, in slightly raised box seats, and standing in the balcony. Presented as an enticing, available woman singing of her desire to submit to a passionate man, Vera is the source of scopophilia not only for the onscreen audience and the clown Pablo but also for the cinematic audience. The mutual desire evolving between Vera and Pablo is marked by the dramatization of their gazes depicted in intercut tracking shots and close-ups, symmetrical camera movements, and continuity editing. In a medium shot, Vera turns towards Pablo and nods to him while the camera slowly moves in until she is in a close-up. With a cut to Pablo, the same tracking device reveals his yearning for her and grants the audience a privileged glimpse at the affection and intimacy developing between the two characters. However, after Vera looks at Pablo directly and smiles, she lowers her eyes coyly, mitigating the effect of her "unladylike" gaze. As if aware of the distance mandated by voyeuristic pleasure, Vera diverts her gaze from Pablo back to the onscreen audience; her adherence to the conventions of the spectacle is signaled by a long shot that re-establishes the distance between Vera and her audience. Conforming to the concept of women as the untouchable object of the erotic male gaze, Vera entices a spectator and then hits him with her tambourine when he tries to grab her.

Offstage Vera cautions Pablo that it would be "irrational" for him to love her, but he envisions a romantic future together: "My love is much greater than the greatest castle. Do you want to live in it?"⁹¹ When offered a nursing position in South America, however, Vera is faced with a dilemma. She can opt for either personal happiness with her Latin lover or a life of service as a nurse and mother. She never even considers the possibility of

combining the two roles; passion simply stands in the way of a better life. By rejecting Pablo, they can both pursue more “productive” lives. He can fulfill his dream of becoming a bicycle racer, and she can return to her vocation as a caretaker. Vera’s only concern is for her daughter Eva: “It is definitely better for her. She will become much healthier, stronger. I’ll have her with me again.” As the purveyor of truth, the elderly clown recognizes the needs of the child are greater than those of the mother: “A child is much more important than a couple of months of happiness, or a couple of years.”⁹²

Convinced that she must allow Pablo to reject her, Vera adopts a vamp persona and ridicules his sentimentality. Her costume abounds in the accoutrements of the fetishized woman: a black floor-length sequined gown slit down the front with a deep décolletage, black feathers on her shoulders, and a black collar with a rose around her neck, while both wrists are bound by black straps originating at the genitals. Holding a glass of champagne, Vera staggers onto the stage while the old clown paints hearts on the young clown’s face. She leans against a larger-than-life Neptune ship’s figurehead and sings a “filthy song” of wanton lust:

Every night a new fortune
and new flirtations
every night another mouth,
that’s the way it’ll be for me:
Don’t talk about loyalty
or feelings,
I can only play with love!
Today you and tomorrow you . . .
there’s no other way,
there’s no other way,
that’s the way it’ll be for me:
I’m not one of those women,
who only do certain nice things
very quietly and secretly
because they don’t dare to do anything in the light
I don’t care at all
even if the whole world learns about it
I am not a Miss after all
with double standards.⁹³

Playing the temptress, Vera slaps the Neptune figure in the face, wraps the tethers of her dress around her arm, and looks into the audience from left to right, toasting her new men. Pablo watches her from the side stage, resuming his position as the privileged voyeur, but now he is ensnared in an overhanging net. The camera movement and editing in this scene are largely

the converse of those used in her last musical number and signal the changed state of affairs. They now suggest a closer, more causal relationship between Vera and her audience while denoting polarity between Vera and Pablo. In a reaction tilt shot the camera moves from the balcony down to Vera, emphasizing the cause and effect relationship between the audience and Vera's spectacle while connecting a lewd woman straddling the bars with her bare legs to the equally vulgar woman on stage. By contrast, sharp editing cuts separate Vera from Pablo. When she swaggers over to Pablo, walking directly toward the retreating camera, aggressive, menacing, an animal after her prey, Pablo pulls the net from in front of his eyes, as if he were seeing her unmasked for the first time, and flees from the spider woman. The sound of broken glass accompanies the final close-up of Vera's mournful countenance.

Leander's musical number is reminiscent of Marlene Dietrich's performance in *Der blaue Engel* (1930), from the seductive woman with a deep voice, vampish costumes, and provocative lyrics down to the maritime artifacts, clown motif, and male humiliation. But unlike the siren Lola Lola, Vera is clearly in disguise. Her deception is based on her selfless love for her daughter; she lies to her lover so that she can resume her parental role, adopting the masquerade of promiscuity and narcissistic self-absorption to achieve the status of respectable (meaning chaste) motherhood.⁹⁴ *Damals* participates in the discursive tradition that maintains the impossibility of combining female desire and motherhood. Juxtaposed to a life of entertainment and passion is hard work and virtuous suffering. Vera opts for the difficult life of motherhood with its duties, sacrificing her own happiness for the sake of her daughter. She rejects the "unacceptable" life in the nightclub and embraces the socially "acceptable" role of a woman who devotes her life to others.

The last flashback to the quarantine station in Las Casas establishes Vera's real identity. Confronted with the evidence of typhus and the possibility of mass contamination, Vera refuses to be dissuaded by the pleas of her fellow travelers and attempts to report the outbreak of infectious disease. Nearly trampled by the frantic, swarming masses, Vera sounds the alarm. Without considering how this action will have detrimental effects on her life (namely, unemployment and isolation in a foreign country), Vera finally conforms to social expectations. She subjugates her compassion for individuals to a greater authority for the good of the community, proving herself worthy of rehabilitation.

With its complex narrative structure consisting of four flashback sequences covering some twenty years and four countries interwoven into a present-day framework, *Damals* disrupts linear development and forces viewers to readjust their "reading" of Vera with each new narrator and time frame. The externalization of the storytelling process illustrates how patriarchal discourse tends to exclude and control women. *Damals's* flashback technique neither questions the relationship between an individual's perspec-

tive and objective reality nor does it demonstrate primarily how each point of view is limited. Instead, it highlights who can articulate the story and who must remain silent.

Each flashback is initiated by a man from Vera's past, who assumes responsibility for the narrative in order to clarify and master the complicated events. The male voice is granted the author-ity to narrate a potentially subversive tale and much of his task will be to come to grips with an ideological conflict inherent in Vera's story. If the patriarchal symbolic order, and National Socialism in particular, dictate an active male and a passive female as necessary components for social harmony, how can a film about passive male figures telling the story of a noncompliant, active woman conform in the end to this dogma and simultaneously recuperate the characters? The flashback device in *Damals* requires viewers to re-evaluate events from a privileged point of view, but it does not encourage moviegoers to question the system of gender norms or to adopt a critical awareness of authoritarian structures. Instead the film directs this energy towards a re-evaluation of Vera as a person and her motivations. Vera is such a highly sympathetic figure played by a superstar that the audience seeks means to rehabilitate her. Since she never overtly rebels against the system and her refusal to conform causes her great suffering, the narrative framework provides a possible solution to her personal dilemma and the fundamental ideological contradiction. The men who narrate her story extinguish any trace of female sedition. The male act of narration denies Vera's agency while still allowing for her punishment. Vera is simultaneously penalized for her transgressions in the past and valorized in the present. The male narrators, especially Jan Meiners, determine that Vera's actions were most harmful to her and necessary for the welfare of others, therefore she is exonerated of any grievous wrongdoing.

The elimination of Vera Meiners's voice from the authorial point of view corresponds to her lack of authority in the social order. The contradictions inherent in her position are embodied in Zarah Leander's status as a cultural icon of sexual ambiguity signified in her legendary masculine voice and excessive feminine role as singer of erotic songs. Vera Meiners's unyielding insistence on adhering to the motherhood principle is equally incongruous with her strong assertion of the fatherhood principle. If she is to be rehabilitated, she can no longer convey this paradox. Within the discursive tradition that posits femininity as deficient, woman's normalcy is predicated on her silence. Laura Mulvey summarizes this practice:

Either she must gracefully give way to the word, the name of the father and the law, or else struggle to keep her child down with her in the half-light of the imaginary. Woman then stands in patriarchal culture as a signifier for the male other, bound by a symbolic order in which man can live out his fantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by

imposing them on the silent image of woman still tied to her place as bearer, not maker, of meaning.⁹⁵

Vera's distance from language is illustrated in her altercation with Jan in Lübeck. When Jan confronts Vera with her lies, she replies "If our entire life together until now is not an answer, I can't give you another one."⁹⁶ Vera's existence must speak for itself. Woman, defined as biology, as life itself, cannot reveal her truth through the cultural construct of language. After her identity is questioned, Vera refuses to speak, unable to convey the complexities of her position. Only after her "true" identity has been established in the fourth flashback does Vera speak for herself, narrating how she adopted the identity of Dr. Gloria O'Conner. Woman's distance from language and agency is encoded in the narrative framework in still a different way. Although men initiate the discursive act, the story unfolds without a voice-over narration and reveals information each man could not have known at the time the events transpired. Although it appears that the narrative point of view agrees with Vera's perspective, she is still bereft of agency since she must illustrate her life and give evidence with her physical presence and without the command of narration.

Whereas each flashback works to establish the identity and crimes of Vera Meiners, the present-day frame also explores the extent to which Jan Meiners is guilty. Characterized as a jealous, untrusting man, Jan first appears in Lübeck entrapped by his own coldness; slumped over a desk with his back to the cell-like windows, the howling wind is his only companion in this self-imposed prison. When Jan and Vera meet again in South America, they are both visually confined by prison bars, as if to imply that they are both guilty of transgressions: she for her defiance and deception, he for abandoning his daughter.

Although Vera is always aware of her obligations as a mother, Jan seems oblivious to the fact that fatherhood carries with it responsibilities. Vera can accept Jan's rejection of her but not his neglect of their child. She is especially angered by his refusal to accept a letter in which she pleaded with him to support Eva financially:

We broke up. I was no longer your wife. So, what was I to you? But for me, even if you weren't my husband any more, for me, you were always the father of my child . . . until that moment, that "delivery refused." That was it. That was the end. Something happened in me. You don't exist for me any more. For me you are just a strange man. A strange man doesn't need to know where my daughter is. It is none of his business.⁹⁷

Eva also chastises her father's behavior: "My father never cared about me, not me, not my mother."⁹⁸ Vera's defiance is a mild transgression compared to Jan's crime: he is guilty of deserting his family.

After reading the documents submitted in Vera's defense, sworn testimony gathered by an official of the law, Jan finally recognizes the value of the motherhood principle:

ATTORNEY: One gets to know a brave life there.

JAN: Yes, and always for others.

ATTORNEY: And she always hurt herself in doing so.⁹⁹

Ironically, Jan, who refused to care for his family financially and emotionally, sits in judgment of Vera and pronounces her a fit mother.

Jan's verdict corresponds to the basic tenets of the National Socialist legal system: "dynamic law" and "intentional criminal law" (*Willensstrafrecht*). Dynamic law, as opposed to an abstract, rigid code of principles, is concerned with the ever-changing "welfare of 'the people' as conceived by the party rather than with the liberty of the individual."¹⁰⁰ Intentional criminal law is based on the notion that proof of criminal activity alone is not sufficient to administer justice. The motivation behind a criminal act is necessary to establish the gravity of an offense and suitable punishment. National Socialism propagates "the myth of a law that is uniquely capable of identifying and justly evaluating the authentic subjectivity of the offender, that which he 'really' is, and of meting out punishment accordingly."¹⁰¹

The charges of asocial behavior levied against Vera are set within the context of her identity as a mother. Although Vera defied authority (and was clearly punished with exclusion from society), she was motivated in each case by the welfare of others rather than individual gain. Most significantly, she has displayed personal and social responsibility in providing her child with an orderly domestic life. Eva provides the most convincing evidence that her mother is not guilty of asocial behavior: "But she can't be held innocently in prison any longer. She did nothing else her entire life but toil, worry, and sacrifice for me."¹⁰² Conforming to the dictates of National Socialism, which posits motherhood in terms of suffering and self-sacrifice, Vera's identity as a good mother is confirmed.

The representatives of the law, District Attorney Mendoza, the lawyer Jan Meiners, and Vera's defense attorney, take control of the situation and discover the true murderer. Gathered at the nightclub, the three men identify the bass player as the offender and speculate on his motivations. Jan reveals that the bass player was the father of a young girl who committed suicide after a man (assumed to be Frank Douglas) seduced and abandoned her. Jan then speculates that when the bass player saw Douglas take another young girl, Eva, up to his hotel room, the musician shot Douglas to prevent a repetition of events. Murder, initially depicted as a crime of passion, is re-evaluated as a harsh necessity to ensure the stability of future families. Since Frank Douglas seduced young girls and belittled women like Vera who were

“honest, upright, with children,” his death is presented as just punishment. The murderer is also transformed into an avenger with heroic dimensions: “It is terrible what he did, but he did it ultimately for his daughter’s sake.”¹⁰³ Confronted by the three attorneys, the bass player administers his own punishment by committing suicide. The solution to the mystery, the return to normalcy, and the implementation of justice are all carried out by men of the law. The system of law and order, briefly disturbed, is restored.

The final scene visualizes Vera’s innocence and the reconstituting of the family. Accompanied by the earlier melody of “Request to the Night,” which signified Vera’s acknowledged and protected position in the bosom of her family and friends, Jan waits at the sun-drenched prison gate. Eva arrives with a bouquet of roses in her arms, looks at her father, and then quickly walks away from him. Vera is freed from her prison cell and walks from the darkness into the light. Her daughter and ex-husband are now filmed from behind the bars, giving us Vera’s view of them as she leaves the prison, but also suggesting that the entire family has been imprisoned. When she sees her mother, Eva hugs her father in reconciliation. Again Vera walks out from the darkness into the shadows of bars, and finally into the bright light, symbolic of her filmic journey from guilt to innocence. Eva hugs her mother and then turns toward the camera. In a close-up the two women face the camera, Eva’s eyes turned toward the left where her father is standing off, Vera’s eyes lifted slightly toward the heavens in a gesture of looking forward into a common future. The press brochure for the film is less ambiguous: “Vera Meiners is free again. She recognizes the inner change in her husband, who was unjustly jealous back then, and begins a new life together with him.”¹⁰⁴

This reunion is not depicted, most likely because the happy ending is simply beyond belief. *Damals* demonstrates what Molly Haskell identifies as the rotten core of the 1940s woman’s films: “in their sublimation or evasion of adult reality, they reveal, almost by accident, real attitudes toward marriage — disillusionment, frustration, and contempt — beneath the sunny-side-up philosophy congealed in the happy ending.”¹⁰⁵

The Double-Edged Sword

If, as Goebbels contended, film is a first-class pedagogical tool, what lessons can be drawn from these two motion pictures? Does *Opfergang* promote the sanctity of marriage because in the last moments the husband renounces his passionate mistress and recognizes his wife as a gentle and giving soul? By the same token, does *Damals* advocate reconciliation and respect for motherhood because the husband finally acknowledges his own failings and his wife’s sacrifices for the good of their family and community? Or do these motion pictures vent the frustrations of cheerless, unfulfilled marriages and

reveal a history of deceit, betrayal, and discontent? Ultimately, they tell both stories, one of happy endings and one of prolonged suffering.

The Nazi melodrama presents the audience with a world in which deviant behavior unfolds, and the longing to rebel against conventional morality (to commit adultery, to lie, to defy authority) is satisfied. By identifying with the fictional characters, the spectator can vicariously experience forbidden pleasures without the threat of actual punishment, thus freeing rebellious emotional energy and directing it towards fantasy and away from action. These motion pictures also serve a didactic function by revealing the consequences of such narratives. Since “abnormal” conduct is consistently punished within the filmic text (and in the fascist state), the spectator can conclude that genuine transgressions against societal norms will also be punished in reality. The emancipatory potential inherent in cinematic sedition is tempered by the specter of fictional and authentic retribution. With its double-edged narrative, the melodrama celebrates and punishes transgressions against societal norms. The genre enchants viewers with female suffering and sacrificial death, satisfying the emotional need for romance while sublimating fantasies of domination to the level of beautiful art.

Delving into hidden desires is only one side of the coin. The Nazi melodrama also presents a reality in which even the most serious problems are readily resolved. Despite abundant interpersonal conflicts, these films re-establish the social order and the nuclear family unit. This happy ending offers the promise of a better world in which a woman’s sacrifice of self-identity and self-determination is rewarded with marital stability. Although the image of strong female protagonists might seem to work against prevalent gender stereotypes, it ultimately reconfirms the status quo. Woman may receive extensive attention in these films, but they do not determine the course of their family life. The male characters make the essential decisions about the future of the family and marriage. They decide if the marriage will survive, they judge the truth, and they make the critical choices. Contextualized within the totalitarian state where the majority of families are separated by war, these sentimental melodramas also provide an *Ersatz* emotional life. With their double-edged narratives, *Opfergang* and *Damals* teach moviegoers to embrace Nazi ideology in their everyday lives . . . and even in their dreams.

Notes

¹ See Stephen Lowry, *Pathos und Politik: Ideologie in Spielfilmen des Nationalsozialismus* (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1991); and Dora Traudisch, *Mutterschaft mit Zuckerguß?: Frauenfeindliche Propaganda im NS-Spielfilm* (Pfaffenweiler: Centaurus, 1993). Lowry concentrates on the two most popular melodramas, *Die Goldene Stadt*

(*The Golden City*) and *Die große Liebe* (*True Love*). Traudisch provides an extensive study of five melodramas under the aspect of anti-natalism.

² "Mann und Frau sind von Anbeginn der Welt zwei verschiedene Wesen, mit ebenso verschiedenen Funktionen. Rein biologisch gesehen ist des Mannes Rolle zur Erhaltung des menschlichen Geschlechts eine relativ kurzfristige, die der Frau eine ungleich längere, opfervollere. Sie birgt viele Monate die Zukunft eines Volkes in ihrem Schoß — gebärt unter Schmerzen, behütet und bewahrt das Kommende mit allen Fasern ihres Herzens." Gertrud Scholtz-Klink, *Die Frau im Dritten Reich: Eine Dokumentation* (Tübingen: Grabert, 1978), 48–49.

³ "Diese nicht wegzudiskutierende Grundwahrheit . . . ist der Ausgangspunkt für alle weitere Gestaltung eines Zusammenlebens und -arbeitens in jedem kultivierten Volk." Scholtz-Klink, *Die Frau im Dritten Reich*, 48.

⁴ "Des Mannes Aufgabe in einem gesunden Volk wird primär stets die schöpferische Tat sein, die der Frau das Gestalten, Behüten, Erhalten, Bewahren. Diese natürlichen Wesenszüge der Frau bergen über ihr leibliches Muttertum in sich alle Anlagen seelischer und geistiger Mütterlichkeit." Scholtz-Klink, *Die Frau im Dritten Reich*, 49.

⁵ "Ist sie eine rechte Mutter, so verliert sie sich selbst in ihrer Familienaufgabe. Aber wunderbar: gerade dadurch wird sie im tiefsten Sinn Frau und Mensch. Je selbstverständlicher sie sich aufgibt, desto mehr. Im Verlieren ihres Lebens findet sie sich, ihre wahre Würde, ihren eigensten Menschen. . . . Sie wird Mutter und damit Vollmensch auf dem Weg der Selbstverleugnung, nicht auf dem der Selbstbehauptung." Guida Diehl, *Die deutsche Frau und der Nationalsozialismus*, 3d ed. (Eisenach: Neuland, 1933), 92.

⁶ Virginia Wright Wexman, *Creating the Couple: Love, Marriage, and Hollywood Performance* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993), 5.

⁷ The Marriage Health Law was amended shortly before the outbreak of war to expedite marriages for soldiers, see Jill Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1975), 44.

⁸ After 1937 women could retain paid employment and still qualify for a marriage loan.

⁹ See Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Wippermann, *The Racial State: Germany 1933–1945* (New York: Cambridge UP, 1991), 140 and 250; and Gisela Bock, "Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany: Motherhood, Compulsory Sterilization, and the State," in *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, eds. Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, and Marion Kaplan (New York: Monthly Review, 1984), 271–96. Angelika Ebbinghaus, ed., *Opfer und Täterinnen: Frauenbiographien des Nationalsozialismus* (Nördlingen: Greno, 1987) examines the role women played as social workers, nurses, doctors, and camp guards, and concludes that women were not just victims but also perpetrators in the Nazi system of racial selection, sterilization, experimentation, and extermination of human beings designated "unworthy of life" (*lebensunwert*).

¹⁰ "Auch die Ehe kann nicht Selbstzweck sein, sondern muß dem einen größeren Ziele, der Vermehrung und Erhaltung der Art und Rasse, dienen. Nur das ist ihr Sinn und ihre Aufgabe." Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf* (Munich: Franz Eher, 1935), 1: 275–76.

¹¹ "Gedenke, daß du ein Deutscher bist!/ Du sollst Geist und Seele rein erhalten!/ Halte deinen Körper rein!/ Du sollst, wenn du erbggesund bist, nicht ehelos bleiben! Heirate nur aus Liebe!/ Wähle als Deutscher nur einen Gatten gleichen oder artverwandten Blutes!/ Bei der Wahl deines Gatten frage nach seinen Vorfahren!/ Gesundheit ist Voraussetzung auch für äußere Schönheit!/ Suche dir nicht einen Gespielen, sondern einen Gefährten für die Ehe!/ Du sollst dir möglichst viele Kinder wünschen!" Abridged from Hans Hagemeyer, ed., *Frau und Mutter: Lebensquell des Volkes*, 2d ed. (Munich: Hoheneichen, 1943), 290.

¹² Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society*, 41.

¹³ Laura Mulvey, "Notes on Sirk and Melodrama," in *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1987), 75.

¹⁴ Mulvey, "Notes on Sirk and Melodrama," 75.

¹⁵ "Die Idee des Männerbundes als Prinzip der Ordnung hat unser Volk vor dem Chaos des Bolschewismus gerettet. Aber auch das andere muß gesagt werden: die Übersteigerung dieser Idee, ihre Festlegung als alleiniger Maßstab aller Dinge zerreißt die Volksgemeinschaft." Lydia Gottschewski, *Männerbund und Frauenfrage: Die Frau im neuen Staat* (Munich: J. F. Lehmann, 1934), 9.

¹⁶ David Bordwell, *Narration in the Fiction Film* (Madison: U of Wisconsin P, 1985), 72.

¹⁷ Molly Haskell, *From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1973), 155.

¹⁸ "Man hat kürzlich einmal festgestellt, daß siebzig Prozent aller Kinobesucher Frauen sind. . . . Warum die Frauen ins Kino gehen, ist klar: sie wollen Liebe sehen und Gefühle haben. Beides wird der Spielfilm, mit einem heiteren und einem nassen Auge, nicht müde, ihnen zu spenden. Auch lieben es ihre Gedanken, um menschliche Dinge zu kreisen und psychologischen Konflikten nachzuhängen. Hier ist ihnen den Film ein unaufhörlicher Übungsstoff für das Leben. Sie haben zudem von der Natur mehr Sinn für das Musische mitbekommen und auch mehr Neigung, sich Wunschträumen zu überlassen, und auch daran läßt es der Spielfilm nicht fehlen." Frank Maraun, "Das Erlebnis entscheidet: Der abendfüllende Kulturfilm — von verschiedenen Seiten gesehen," *Der deutsche Film* 2, no. 7 (January 1938): 189.

¹⁹ "Ein unberechtigter Vorwurf: Ist der Film eine weibliche Kunst? Frauen und Männer sind sich einig in der Forderung nach dem künstlerischen, lebensnahen Film." *Film-Kurier* 128 (June 3, 1938).

²⁰ Binné considered women "aufnahmebereiter weit zugänglicher und aufgeschlossener als der Mann." Ingrid Binné, "Was erwartet die deutsche Frau vom Film," *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 135 (June 11, 1938). She argued further: "Die Frau schaut heute nicht mehr teilnahmslos den politischen Vorgängen im Reich und in der Welt zu. Sie steht lebendig miterlebend mitten im Geschehen unserer Zeit." Ingrid Binné, "Wie sieht die deutsche Frau den ausländischen Film?" *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 170 (July 22, 1938). See also Ingrid Binné, "Was sagt die Frau über Wochenschau und Kulturfilm?" *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 192 (August 17, 1938).

²¹ "Wir sehen in der Frau die ewige Mutter unseres Volkes und die Lebens, Arbeits- und auch Kampfgefährtin des Mannes." Binné, "Was erwartet die deutsche Frau vom Film."

²² Christine Großmann writes of women: "Sie haben mehr Phantassie, wenn man darunter die Fähigkeit zu träumen versteht, die Fähigkeit, mitzugehen mit dem Geschehen, das auf der Leinwand vor ihnen abrollt, und die Fähigkeit, sich selbst in diese Geschehnisse hineinzudenken." Christine Großmann "Worin besteht die Wirkung des Films auf die Frauen?" *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 78 (April 1, 1938).

²³ David Welch, *Propaganda and the German Cinema 1933–1945* (New York: Oxford UP, 1983), 217.

²⁴ Mary Ann Doane, *The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1987), 4.

²⁵ Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society*, 101.

²⁶ Louis P. Lochner, ed., *The Goebbels Diaries 1942–1943* (New York: Doubleday), 230.

²⁷ Kristina Söderbaum, *Nichts bleibt immer so: Rückblenden auf ein Leben vor und hinter der Kamera*, 3rd ed. (Bayreuth: Hestia, 1984), 183–84.

²⁸ Gerd Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik: Eine soziologische Untersuchung über die Spielfilme des Dritten Reiches* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1969), 152.

²⁹ Although Vera Meiners's concern for her daughter Eva motivates her to sacrifice her own happiness repeatedly in *Damals*, the mother-daughter relationship is never fully developed on screen. *Kora Terry* (1940) features twin sisters who embody the archetypal split of whore and madonna. For an analysis of this film, see Traudisch, *Mutterschaft mit Zuckerguß*, 131–49.

³⁰ "Harlans spezifische Dienstleistungen fürs Dritte Reich waren seine schweren Melodramen . . . die alle insgesamt seismographisch die innen- und außenpolitische Entwicklung des NS widerspiegeln." Karsten Witte, "Der barocke Faschist: Veit Harlan und seine Filme," in *Intellektuelle im Bann des Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Karl Corino (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1980), 150–51.

³¹ Critical evaluations of *Opfergang*'s artistic merit and ideological content vary widely. Friedemann Beyer considers *Opfergang* Harlan's masterpiece (*Die Ufa Stars im Dritten Reich: Frauen für Deutschland* [Munich: Heyne, 1991], 232); while Francis Courtade and Pierre Cadars term it "puerile romanticism" (*Geschichte des Films im Dritten Reich* [Munich: Hanser, 1975], 246). Richard Taylor sees it as indirect propaganda (*Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany* [New York: Harper & Row, 1979], 165–66). According to Siegfried Zielinski, by presenting an idealized portrait of marriage as a durable institution, *Opfergang* worked to pacify soldiers and their wives separated by the war (*Veit Harlan* [Frankfurt a. M.: Rita G. Fischer, 1981], 33). Bogusław Drewniak maintains that *Opfergang* enjoyed extraordinary success among the public during its premiere run and in its first month (December 8, 1944 to January 12, 1945) brought in the enormous sum of 10 million RM (*Der deutsche Film 1938–1945: Ein Gesamtüberblick* [Düsseldorf: Droste, 1987], 631–32, 675–78). Traudisch offers an excellent in-depth study of anti-natalism in *Opfergang* (*Mutterschaft mit Zuckerguß*, 150–86). For an earlier version of this chapter, see Mary-Elizabeth O'Brien, "Male Conquest of the Female Continent in Veit Harlan's *Opfergang* (1944)," *Monatshefte* 87, no. 4 (1995): 431–45.

³² Veit Harlan, *Im Schatten meiner Filme* (Sigbert Mohn: Gütersloh, 1966), 168–69. Friedemann Beyer summarizes Goebbels's relationship to the film: "Rasch wurde

Opfergang zu einem seiner Lieblingsfilme, den er sich privat immer wieder ansah, um danach häufig über den Tod zu philosophieren. Freigeben wollte er den Film nicht.” (*Die Ufa Stars*, 235) [*Opfergang* quickly became one of his favorite films, which he viewed privately again and again in order to philosophize about death afterwards. He did not want to release the film.]

³³ “Dabei wollen wir gar nicht verkennen, daß der Film natürlich als große und in die Tiefe dringende Massenkunst in stärkster Weise auch der Unterhaltung zu dienen hat. Aber in einer Zeit, in der der gesamten Nation so schwere Lasten und Sorgen aufgebürdet werden, ist auch die Unterhaltung staatspolitisch von besonderem Wert. . . . Darüber hinaus aber ist der Film in seiner modernen Entwicklung ein nationales Erziehungsmittel erster Klasse.” Goebbels’s speech from October 12, 1941, qtd. in Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 480.

³⁴ For a discussion of how Nazi entertainment films work to sublimate and redirect socially unacceptable desires, see Traudisch; Lowry; and Heide Schlüpmann, “Faschistische Trugbilder weiblicher Autonomie,” *Frauen und Film* 44/45 (October 1988): 44–66.

³⁵ “Nicht das ist die beste Propaganda, bei der die eigentlichen Elemente der Propaganda immer sichtbar zutage treten, sondern das ist die beste Propaganda, die sozusagen unsichtbar wirkt.” See Goebbels’s speech from February 15, 1941, qtd. in Albrecht, *Nationalsozialistische Filmpolitik*, 468.

³⁶ The discourse on femininity in *Opfergang* corresponds to strategies found in the classic film narrative. Annette Kuhn describes how the classic Hollywood cinema attempts to recuperate woman: “A woman character may be restored to the family by falling in love, by ‘getting her man,’ by getting married, or otherwise accepting a ‘normative’ female role. If not, she may be directly punished for her narrative and social transgression by exclusion, outlawing or even death,” *Women’s Pictures: Feminism and Cinema* (New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1982), 34–35.

³⁷ I could find no historical reference to any group named German Colonial Union (*Deutscher Kolonialbund*). The closest equivalent is the *Kolonialverein*, a private organization founded in 1882 to help foster colonialism in Germany. See Woodruff Smith, *The German Colonial Empire* (Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina P, 1978); and Arthur J. Knoll and Lewis H. Gann, eds., *Germans in the Tropics: Essays in German Colonial History* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1987).

³⁸ The *Reichskolonialbund*, founded in 1933 and reorganized in 1936, monopolized colonial activity in Germany until early 1943. See Wolfe W. Schmokel, *Dream of Empire: German Colonialism, 1919–1945* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1964). According to Klaus Kreimeier, the Ufa board of directors considered colonialism an appropriate film topic for the 1933/34 production, but the material became politically sensitive when a few months later when the National Socialists expelled Hugenberg from the cabinet for his colonial aims (*Die Ufa Story: Geschichte eines Filmkonzerns* [Munich: Hanser, 1992], 247–48). By 1937 colonial topics were again embraced by the film community because Hitler openly supported the policy of reestablishing Germany’s colonial empire in his Harvest Festival speech (*Die Ufa Story*, 307–8).

³⁹ Filming of *Opfergang* began in August of 1942, see Beyer, *Die Ufa Stars*, 228. Rommel’s troops pushed the British back into Egypt in June 1942 and were within

fifty miles of Alexandria. By November 7–8, 1942, however, the Anglo-American troops landed at Algiers, Oran, and Casablanca. By May 1943 German troops surrendered and the desert campaign was essentially over.

⁴⁰ Kuan-yin, the Chinese translation of Avalokitesvara, “a bodhisattva especially associated with the principle of compassion . . . watches over all beings and heeds their cries of suffering and distress.” See Raoul Birnbaum, “Avalokitesvara,” in *The Encyclopedia of Religion*, ed. Mircea Eliade (New York: Macmillan, 1987), 2: 11–14.

⁴¹ “Albrecht, Albrecht, du bist jetzt ein berühmter, würdevoller Mann, darfst dir solche Geschichten nicht mehr leisten. Stellung verpflichtet.” All film dialogues are taken from the videocassette of *Opfergang* in commercial distribution. The censor-cards contain no dialogue and no narrative summaries. Compare *Opfergang*, Censor-Card 59952, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

⁴² Sigmund Freud, “The Question of Lay Analysis: Conversations with an Impartial Person,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1953), 20: 212.

⁴³ A press advertisement for *Opfergang* summarizes the conflict as follows: “Es geht in diesem Film um die Entscheidung eines Mannes zwischen zwei Frauen, in denen er das rätselhafte Widerspiel des himmlisch Reinen [Octavia] und des irdischen Begehrens [Äls] zu erkennen glaubt. Fast erliegt er dem fremden Zauber der einen — bis er durch eine an Selbstaufopferung grenzende Tat der anderen und somit von der edlen Größe und tiefen Liebe dieser, seiner Frau zur Umkehr bestimmt wird.” [This film is about a man’s decision between two women, in whom he recognizes the puzzling reflection of heavenly purity (Octavia) and earthly desire (Äls). He almost succumbs to the strange magic of the one — until an act bordering on self-sacrifice by the other one convinces him of his wife’s true nobility and deep love and determines his return home.] *Opfergang: Ein Ufa Farbfilm*, press package (Berlin: Werbedienst der Deutschen Filmvertrieb-Gesellschaft, n.d.), 3, *Opfergang* Document File 12480, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv Berlin.

⁴⁴ “Sie ist, was sie immer war.” *Opfergang* film dialogue.

⁴⁵ Linda Schulte-Sasse, “The Jew as Other under National Socialism: Veit Harlan’s *Jud Süß*,” *German Quarterly* 61, no. 1 (1988): 28.

⁴⁶ “Einer dieser Stunden wird deine letzte sein.” *Opfergang* film dialogue.

⁴⁷ “Wind und Wellen, Sonnenglut und Sonnenlust.” *Opfergang* film dialogue.

⁴⁸ Beyer recognizes the fatal mother motif as common to all of Kristina Söderbaum’s films in the Third Reich (*Die Ufa Story*, 233). There is an implication that Äls’s mother also bore her child out of wedlock, since it is Äls’s stepfather who bequeaths her the estate and not her biological father, who is never mentioned.

⁴⁹ Both Äls and her mother are described as “waghalsig,” “leichtsinnig,” and especially “unvernünftig.” “Eine kranke Mutter? . . . Am meisten leidet doch das Kind darunter.” *Opfergang* film dialogue.

⁵⁰ Traudisch, *Mutterschaft mit Zuckerguß?* 178–79.

⁵¹ “Es hätte ja auch gar keinen Sinn. Kaum bist du da, da schließt du das Haus wieder ab und ziehst nach dem Süden oder nach dem Norden und dann muß es wieder raus,

das Kind. Das ist doch nichts für ein Kind. Oder willst du es überall mit hinschleppen? Ein Kind muß ein geordnetes Leben haben." *Opfergang* film dialogue.

⁵² National Socialism exalted the nuclear family as the "germ cell of the nation," but it tolerated and during the later phases of the war propagated the idea of unwed motherhood for the Aryan select. See "Dem Führer ein Kind schenken: Mutterkult im Nationalsozialismus," in *Frauen unterm Hakenkreuz*, eds. Maruta Schmidt and Gabi Dietz (Berlin: Elefanten Press, 1983), 74–94. For a discussion of sterilization measures taken against women deemed "unfit," see Bock, "Racism and Sexism in Nazi Germany," 271–96.

⁵³ "Was der Mann an Opfern bringt im Ringen seines Volkes, bringt die Frau an Opfern im Ringen um die Erhaltung dieses Volkes in den einzelnen Fällen. Was der Mann einsetzt an Heldenmut auf dem Schlachtfeld, setzt die Frau ein in ewig geduldiger Hingabe, in ewig geduldigem Leid und Ertragen. Jedes Kind, das sie zur Welt bringt, ist eine Schlacht, die sie besteht für Sein oder Nichtsein ihres Volkes." Adolf Hitler's speech on September 8, 1934, in Nuremberg before the NS-Frauenschaft, in *Reden und Proklamationen 1932–1945*, ed. Max Domarus (Munich: Süddeutscher Verlag, 1965), 1. 1: 451. My emphasis.

⁵⁴ Äls lacks an individual identity; she is described as being the nature she inhabits: "Albrecht und Octavia reiten am Meer entlang. Im Anblick der Brandung denken beide an Äls, die Wind und Welle war" (*Opfergang*, *Illustrierte Film Bühne* 1943 [Munich: Verlag Film-Bühne, n.d.], my emphasis). [Albrecht and Octavia ride along the ocean. While looking at the surf both think about Äls, who was wind and waves.] Octavia voices this sentiment in the film with her remark to Albrecht: "wind and waves were her element. She is in wind and waves."

⁵⁵ From its premiere until today, film critics have termed the *Faschingsball* sequence in *Opfergang* superfluous. Ludwig Brunhuber, a contemporary critic of the film, writes in his film description: "Die Farbe, von Bruno Mondì an der Kamera mit schwelgerischer Lust und Freiheit gemischt, wird zum wesentlichen Ausdruck, steigert sich zu wahren Farbenrausch, wie in dem Karnevalsfest, was auf Kosten des Atmosphärischen, der Filmdichtung geht" ("Der *Opfergang*," [n.p., n.d.], *Opfergang* Document File 12480, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv Berlin) [The color, which Bruno Mondì mixes with luxurious delight and freedom in the camera, becomes a fundamental expression, intensifies to a true color-intoxication, like at the carnival festivities, which is achieved at the cost of the film's atmosphere and poetry]. Zielinski assesses the carnival sequence in much the same light: "Charakteristisch für den dramaturgischen Einsatz der Farbe ist zum Beispiel eine pompöse inszenierte Karnevals-Szene in *Opfergang*, die für den Handlungsverlauf völlig unbedeutend ist, dafür aber eine Fülle optischer Reize vermittelt" (*Veit Harlan*, 34) [Characteristic for the dramaturgic use of color is, for instance, a pompously staged carnival scene which is completely meaningless for the plot development but conveys a plethora of optical stimuli].

⁵⁶ The carnival is a central event in *Barcarole* (1935) and *Carnival of Love* (Karneval der Liebe, 1943).

⁵⁷ Mikhail Bakhtin, *Rabelais and His World*, trans. Helene Iswolsky (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1968), 7 and 255.

⁵⁸ Mary Ann Doane, *Femmes Fatales: Feminism, Film Theory, Psychoanalysis* (New York: Routledge, 1991), 46.

⁵⁹ "Sie hat geschrien wie am Spieß." *Opfergang* film dialogue.

⁶⁰ "Man ist ihm immer nah, dem Tod. Und es ist ja auch ganz gut, wenn man ihm ab und zu ein bißchen zulächelt und sagt: du bist mein Freund. Du kommst, wenn ich nicht mehr kann." *Opfergang* film dialogue.

⁶¹ Doane, *Desire to Desire*, 64–65.

⁶² "Sterben müsse die an dem Ehebruch schuldige Frau und nicht der Ehemann. Die Ehe müsse vielmehr erhalten bleiben. Das wäre übrigens nicht nur für die Front, sondern auch für die Heimat im volkserzieherischen Sinne besser." Harlan, *Im Schatten meiner Filme*, 164.

⁶³ The aestheticizing of female pain is well illustrated in fascist melodramas such as *La Habanera* (1937), *Zu neuen Ufern* (1937), *Ich klage an* (1941), *Die Goldene Stadt* (1942), and *Damals* (1943).

⁶⁴ Äls: "So zu sterben, das wäre der schönste Tod." *Opfergang* film dialogue. Hanna: "Ich fühle mich so leicht, so glücklich, wie noch nie. Ich wünschte, es wäre der Tod." *Ich klage an* film dialogue. Karl Ludwig Rost writes: "Nicht die Angst vor dem Tode, sondern die Angst vor einsamen Sterben ohne den geliebten Mann [erscheint] als das eigentliche Grauen." Karl Ludwig Rost, *Medizin im Spielfilm des Nationalsozialismus*, ed. Udo Benzenhöfer and Wolfgang Eckart (Tecklenburg: Burgverlag, 1990), 46.

⁶⁵ See Saul Friedländer, *Reflections of Nazism: An Essay on Kitsch and Death*, trans. Thomas Weyr (New York: Harper & Row, 1984); Jay W. Baird, *To Die for Germany: Heroes in the Nazi Pantheon* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990); Peter Reichel, *Der schöne Schein des Dritten Reiches: Faszination und Gewalt des Faschismus* (Munich: Hanser, 1991).

⁶⁶ The figure Don Pedro in Douglas Sirk's *La Habanera* (1937) represents a notable exception. He dies from a tropical fever, but his life could have been saved if he had not had the cure destroyed.

⁶⁷ Saul Friedländer, *Reflections of Nazism*, 43.

⁶⁸ "Das Ungestüm, jung sterben zu wollen, als elegante Windsbraut auf den Wellen zu reiten und auf dem Rücken der Pferde zu jagen, das Ungezähmte, Fieberhafte und Lebensüchtige kommt durch Kristina Söderbaum sehr wirkungsvoll zum Ausdruck. Sie weiß mit dekorativer Anmut zu sterben." Richard Biedrzyński, "Liebe, Leid und Luxus," *Völkischer Beobachter*, Berlin ed. (December 31, 1944).

⁶⁹ Ariane Thomalla, *Die femme fragile: Ein literarischer Frauentypus der Jahrhundertwende* (Düsseldorf: Bertelsmann-Universitätsverlag, 1972).

⁷⁰ Octavia: "Aber wir können uns doch später so machen, wie wir wollen, oder vielmehr wie du es willst, Albrecht." Later, Octavia says: "Ich bin so glücklich, wie es Albrecht ist." *Opfergang* film dialogue.

⁷¹ "Die Welt der Frau ist der Mann. An anderes denkt sie nur ab und zu." Henry Picker ed., *Hitlers Tischgespräche im Führerhauptquartier 1941–42* (Bonn: Athenäum, 1951), 326.

⁷² "In ihrer durch Vornehmheit gekühlten Schönheit, in ihrer Größe, Gelassenheit und unachtsam gemessenen Haltung." Rudolf Binding, *Der Opfergang* (New York: Prentice Hall, 1934), 4.

⁷³ Leander contributed significantly to her own mythic status by portraying herself as an unwanted intruder in the German film world: "Goebbels war durchaus nicht begeistert davon gewesen, daß die Ufa ausgerechnet eine Ausländerin zur leading lady der eigenen Gesellschaft und wenn möglich des gesamten deutschen Films aufbauen wollte. Er betrachtete es als Armutszeugnis, daß das stolze dritte Reich nicht eine eigene Garbo produzieren konnte. Diese Schwedin paßte ihm einfach nicht, und dementsprechend behandelte man mich von oben wie Luft." Zarah Leander, *Es war so wunderbar! Mein Leben* (Hamburg: Hoffman und Campe, 1973), 170. [Goebbels was by no means enthusiastic that Ufa wanted to make a foreigner of all people the leading lady of its own company and, if possible, the entire German film industry. He considered it evidence of inadequacy that the proud Third Reich could not produce its own Garbo. This Swede simply did not suit him and one treated me accordingly as if I were invisible.] The conditions of her initial contract with Ufa (choice of screenplays, 200,000 RM a year, 53% of her wages to be paid in Swedish crowns directly to her Stockholm bank account) as well as her personal outings with Goebbels belie Leander's assessment of her treatment.

⁷⁴ In *Heimat* (1938) Magda does not marry the father of her illegitimate child (he commits suicide), but she is eventually accepted by her father and reintegrated into the family. In *Der Weg ins Freie* (1941) Antonia commits suicide to maintain her former husband's current marriage.

⁷⁵ See Cornelia Zumkeller, *Zarah Leander: Ihre Filme — ihr Leben* (Munich: Heyne, 1988), 133 and Kreimeier, *Die Ufa Story*, 354–55. Drewniak maintains that Leander's films continued to be shown in Germany after her departure, but numerous press releases about her were barred from publication (*Der deutsche Film*, 136).

⁷⁶ Drewniak, *Der deutsche Film*, 631. For contemporaneous accounts of *Damals* in the trade press, see Erno Ohlisch, "Mit den Augen des Architekten: Walter Haags Bauten zu dem neuen Zarah-Leander-Film der Ufa 'Damals,'" *Film-Kurier* 191 (August 17, 1942); Georg Speckner, "Dreimal mit Zarah Leander: Hans Stüwe in dem neuen Ufa-Film 'Damals,'" *Film-Kurier* 197 (August 24, 1942); Hermann Hacker, "Der Wechsel der Schauplätze: Blick auf den Zarah-Leander-Film 'Damals,'" *Film-Kurier* 282 (December 1, 1942); "Ich habe Sie belogen!" Dramatische Szene mit Zarah Leander in dem Ufa-film 'Damals,'" *Film-Kurier* 262 (November 7, 1942); H. S., "In der Quarantäne-Station: Dramatische Szenen aus dem Ufafilm 'Damals,'" *Film-Kurier* 282 (December 1, 1942); and F. H. "Von der Führung des Schauspielers und ihren Voraussetzungen: Anmerkungen anlässlich der Arbeit Rolf Hansens an dem von ihm inszenierten Ufa-Film 'Damals,'" *Film-Kurier* 282 (January 14, 1943); "Wer kennt diese Frau?" *Filmwelt* 3/4 (January 20, 1943).

⁷⁷ "Das Reisen ist eine der großen Möglichkeiten der Gesellschaft, sich in einem dauernden Zustand von Geistesabwesenheit zu halten, der sie vor der Auseinandersetzung mit sich selber bewahrt. Es hilft der Phantasie auf die unrichtigen Wege, es deckt die Aussicht mit Eindrücken zu, es trägt zu den Herrlichkeiten der Welt, damit ihrer Häßlichkeit nicht geachtet werde. (Der Zuwachs an Weltkenntnis, den es bringt, dient zur Verklärung des bestehenden Systems, in dem er erworben wird.)" Siegfried Krauer, *Das Ornament der Masse: Essays* (Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, 1977), 288.

⁷⁸ Michael Kater writes: "jazz's potential for being identified with ill-suffered minorities or pariahs of German society, the demimonde, the depraved, blacks, Jews, rendered it forever suspect in the eyes of social and racial bigots, even if they were privately tempted to relish the peculiar aesthetics of this music" (*Different Drummers: Jazz in the Culture of Nazi Germany* [New York: Oxford UP, 1992], 25). A public campaign against women smoking was launched as early as 1933. See "Frauen sollen nicht öffentlich rauchen," *Vossische Zeitung*, August 19, 1933, qtd. in Clifford Kirkpatrick, *Nazi Germany: Its Women and Family Life* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1938), 105.

⁷⁹ Burleigh, *The Racial State*, 173.

⁸⁰ The directive of the Reich Ministry of the Interior from 1940, qtd. in Burleigh, *The Racial State*, 182.

⁸¹ Burleigh, *The Racial State*, 167.

⁸² Burleigh, *The Racial State*, 168.

⁸³ "Heut,' wenn die Nacht ganz leise und fein/ tritt in mein Zimmer hier,/ hüllt' ich mich in ihren Mantel ein/ und sag' bittend zu ihr:// Liebe Nacht, komm,' laß dir sagen,/ was ich ganz von Herzen will./ Keine Uhr soll heute schlagen/ und die Zeit soll still stehen,/ und nicht atmen soll die Welt!/ Wenn er mich im Arme hält!" Text and music by Ralph Benatzky, *Damals, Das Program von heute* 1871 (Berlin: Das Program von heute, Zeitschrift für Film und Theater, n.d.). The same song is named "Bitte an die Nacht" in *Damals, Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 3309 (Berlin: Vereinigte Verlagsgesellschaften Franke & Co. KG., n.d.) but includes only the second stanza. When performing the song in this film, Leander changes "ihre Arme" in line three to "ihren Mantel" and transposes "stehen" and "still" in line eight.

⁸⁴ Alte Frau: "Was seid ihr doch für Egoisten, ihr Männer. Du auch. Sag mal, warum läßt du sie nicht Sängerin werden?" Jan: "Das fehlte noch. Ich bin froh, daß sie nicht Ärztin geworden ist." Sanitätsrat Petersen: "Ja, eben. So geht es im Leben. Endlich erfindet der liebe Gott ein Geschöpf, das alle guten Gaben besitzt. Sie kann was. Sie studiert Medizin, und außerdem eine herrliche Stimme, sieht wundervoll aus. Und was passiert? Sie verliebt sich in unseren guten Meiners." Jan: "Du." Sanitätsrat Petersen: "Der zwar mein bester Freund ist, aber übernacht sozusagen, sind alle Karrieren pfuscht, und sie ist nur noch Frau." Vera: "Nur noch. Kann man denn mehr sein?" Alte Frau: "Nein, wenn man glücklich ist." Vera: "Man ist sehr glücklich!" All film dialogues are taken from the videocassette of *Damals* available in commercial release. The censor cards include a narrative description but no film dialogue. Compare *Damals*, Censor-Card 58689, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

⁸⁵ "Frau Doktor, Sie müssen mir helfen. Der Professor ist ja bestimmt ein guter Arzt, aber er ist doch nur ein Mann. Was weiß denn so ein Mann, auch wenn er noch so gelehrt ist, von einer Mutter. Selbst wenn er Vater ist. Aber Sie sind doch eine Frau. Sie müssen das doch verstehen. Sie können doch nicht einfach zu mir sagen, Ihr Kind ist verloren. Da kann man nichts machen." *Damals* film dialogue.

⁸⁶ "Frausein heißt Muttersein." Paula Siber von Groote, *Die Frauenfrage und ihre Lösung durch den Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Kallmeyer, 1933), 23.

⁸⁷ "Jetzt sind wir beide hier ganz überflüssig." *Damals* film dialogue.

⁸⁸ "Wo gehen wir denn dahin, wenn jeder junge Arzt dem Chef bei seiner Behandlungsweise dazwischen pfuscht . . . wenn er sogar bei strikter Einordnung gerade das Gegenteil tut? Die Kranken in der Klinik werden ihres Lebens nicht mehr sicher." *Damals* film dialogue.

⁸⁹ "Begreifen Sie nun, daß ich einer Mutter ihr Kind retten möchte, um welchen Preis auch immer." *Damals* film dialogue.

⁹⁰ "Wer weiß denn, was ein Frauenherz heimlich bewegt,/ für wen es lodernd entbrennt!/ Doch plötzlich fühlst du, daß es für dich innig schlägt,/ wenn es dir selig bekennt:/ Ich kann nicht sagen, was mir an dir so gefällt,/ ist es dein Lächeln, dein Blick?/ Ich weiß nicht, ob ein Rausch, ob die Liebe mich hält,/ ich fühl nur, — du wärest mein Glück . . . // Refrain: Einen wie dich könnt' ich lieben,/ zärtlich und doch voller Glut;/ einem so wie dir ganz gehören/ und ihm tausend Schwüre schwören!/ Einen wie dich könnte ich lieben,/ wie wär' mein Herz ihm so gut . . . / Einem so wie dir möcht' ich geben/ meine Seele und mein Leben!/ Er soll mir alles sein,/ meine Sonne, mein Glück, meine Welt!" Text by Bruno Balz with music by Lothar Brühne reproduced in *Damals, Das Program von heute* (1871), n.p.

⁹¹ "Meine Liebe ist viel größer als das größte Schloß. Willst du darin wohnen?" *Damals* film dialogue.

⁹² Vera recognized, "Für sie ist es bestimmt besser. Sie wird viel gesunder werden, kräftiger. Ich hab' sie wieder bei mir." The elderly clown agrees: "Ein Kind ist viel wichtiger als ein paar Monate glücklich sein, oder ein paar Jahre." *Damals* film dialogue.

⁹³ "Jede Nacht ein neues Glück/ und neue Liebelei'n/ jede Nacht ein anderer Mund,/ so soll es bei mir sein:/ Sprich nicht von Treue,/ nicht von Gefühlen,/ ich kann mit Liebe/ immer nur spielen!/ Heute dich und morgen dich . . . / So und nicht anders,/ so und nicht anders,/ so soll es sein für mich!// Ich bin ja keine von den Frauen,/ die die gewissen netten Sachen/ weil sie bei Licht sich nichts getrauen,/ nur immer still und äußerst heimlich machen/ auch wenn's die ganze Welt erfährt/ das ist mir ganz egal/ Ich bin ja schließlich keine Miss/ mit doppelter Moral." Text by Bruno Balz with music by Lothar Brühne reproduced in *Damals, Das Program von heute* (1871), n.p.

⁹⁴ Linda Williams recognizes the same strategy in the Hollywood classic *Stella Dallas* (1937). See "'Something Else Besides a Mother': *Stella Dallas* and the Maternal Melodrama," in *Home is Where the Heart Is: Studies in Melodrama and the Woman's Film*, ed. Christine Gledhill (London: British Film Institute, 1987), 313.

⁹⁵ Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures*, 15.

⁹⁶ Vera maintains, "Wenn unser ganz bisheriges Leben keine Antwort ist, eine andere kann ich dir nicht geben." *Damals* film dialogue.

⁹⁷ Vera gives her husband an impassioned reckoning: "Wir haben ja Schluß gemacht. Ich war nicht mehr deine Frau. Also was ging ich dich an? Aber für mich, wenn du auch nicht mehr mein Mann warst, für mich warst du doch immer der Vater meines Kindes, bis zu diesem Augenblick, bis zu diesem 'Annahme verweigert.' Da war es aus. Da war es zu Ende. Da entstand in mir was. Du bist für mich nicht mehr auf der Welt. Du bist für mich ein fremder Mann. Ein fremder Mann braucht nicht zu wissen, wo meine Tochter ist. Es geht ihn nichts an." *Damals* film dialogue.

⁹⁸ Eva reiterates that her father abandoned them: "Mein Vater hat sich nie um mich gekümmert, um mich nicht, um meine Mutter nicht." *Damals* film dialogue.

⁹⁹ The attorney comments, "Ein tapferes Leben, das man da kennenlernt." Jan concedes, "Ja, und immer für andere." Whereupon the attorney concludes, "Und immer hat sie sich selbst dabei geschadet." *Damals* film dialogue.

¹⁰⁰ J. P. Stern, *Hitler: The Führer and the People* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1975), 120. For a discussion of women in the legal profession, see Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Society*, 170–73. In a letter to the Reich Minister of Justice dated August 24, 1936, Martin Bormann, Deputy of the Führer, conveyed Adolf Hitler's policy towards women lawyers and judges: "Er [der Führer] hat entschieden, daß Frauen weder Richter noch Anwalt werden sollen. Juristinnen können deshalb im Staatsdienst nur in der Verwaltung verwandt werden." Qtd. in Scholtz-Klink, *Die Frau im Dritten Reich*, 61. [He has decided that women shall neither be judges nor lawyers. Female jurists can therefore be employed as civil servants only in administration.]

¹⁰¹ Stern, *Hitler: The Führer and the People*, 123.

¹⁰² Eva argues, "Aber sie darf doch nicht länger unschuldig im Gefängnis. Sie hat ihr ganzes Leben lang nichts anders getan, als sich für mich geplagt, gequält und geopfert." *Damals* film dialogue.

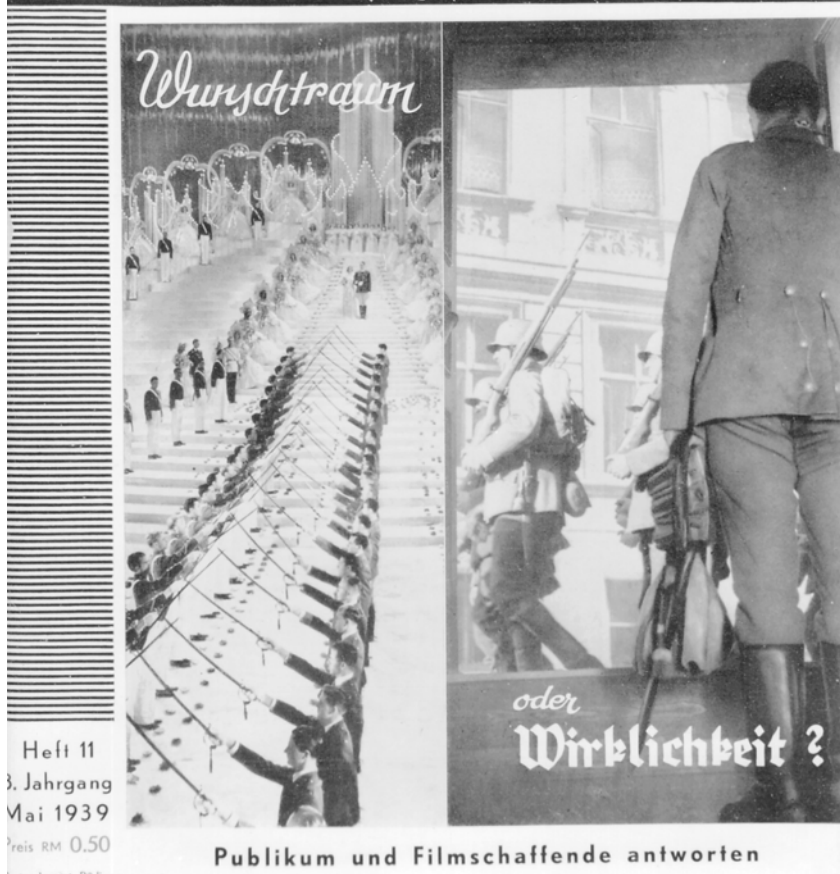
¹⁰³ Vera recognized that Frank Douglas would never admire women who were "brav, bieder, mit Kind." Jan concludes, "Es ist schrecklich, was er getan hat, aber er hat es schließlich um der Tochter willens getan." *Damals* film dialogue.

¹⁰⁴ "Vera Meiners ist wieder frei. Sie erkennt die innere Umkehr ihres damals aus Eifersucht ungerechten Mannes und beginnt gemeinsam mit ihm ein neues Leben." *Damals, Das Programm von heute* 1871.

¹⁰⁵ Molly Haskell, 156.

der deutsche **film**

ZEITSCHRIFT FÜR FILMKUNST UND FILMWIRTSCHAFT



“Dream or Reality? The Public and Film Community Answer,”
Der deutsche Film (1939).

5: The Forbidden Desires of Everyday Life: The Problem Film

IN MAY 1939, *Der deutsche Film*, the official journal of the Reich Film Chamber, published a special issue devoted to the question of what the public wanted from cinema, “a dream world or reality?” Two mottos framed the discussion and imparted the highest authority in the Third Reich. The Führer was quoted first: “Theater, film, literature, press, radio, they all have to serve the maintenance of universal values living in the spirit of our folk.”¹ The second motto stemmed from the propaganda minister: “Film should not escape from daily hardship and lose itself in a dreamland that only exists in the minds of starry-eyed directors and scriptwriters but nowhere else on earth.”² This special issue also contained surveys and scholarly articles, in which moviegoers, actors, directors, and critics all agreed that the film industry should make exemplary films about contemporary life in Nazi Germany. Critics lamented that “problem films,” serious dramas dealing with social issues, seldom graced the screen. What the German public needed, they argued, was riveting stories about ordinary people with typical conflicts. Audiences would recognize the universal values National Socialism strove to uphold by watching movies with sympathetic characters representing the needs of the entire community. Normal problems in everyday life were not supposed to be covered up with the fairy tales of pure fantasy or depressing stories drenched in hopelessness and despair. Viewers needed positive films about daily hardships to learn how to form realistic expectations and deal with disappointment. The consensus was clear: cinema should reflect reality.

It is surprising that the trade press would argue so adamantly in favor of the problem film because the genre demands an honest discussion of society's ills in a way that National Socialism routinely rejected. With its emphasis on how “the individual confronts social contradictions (class difference, moral conventions, poverty) beyond his/her control and/or comprehension,” the problem film casts a critical look at the world as it is and explicitly calls for change.³ Although the public wanted serious movies about contemporary life, the propaganda ministry required that these movies demonstrate optimism and conflict resolution at any price, a prescription contrary to the very definition of the problem film. Thus Hitler and Goebbels were often disappointed with the type of films they had originally promoted and were compelled to censor several important problem films because they depicted

contemporary social and economic issues all too realistically. Unflattering films that scrutinized class relationships and social institutions were labeled “defeatist” and summarily banned. Massive state control of the motion picture industry made it extremely difficult for directors to make blatantly oppositional films and also insured that only about two dozen completed films were banned between 1933 and 1945.⁴

Three problem films stand out as well-made movies that expose social problems National Socialism did not want to address openly or could not solve satisfactorily: *Das Leben kann so schön sein* (Life can be so Wonderful, Rolf Hansen, 1938), *Der verzauberte Tag* (The Enchanted Day, Peter Pe- was, 1944), and *Via Mala* (The Street of Evil, Josef von Baky, 1945). All three films were banned by the National Socialist regime for being defeatist and presenting the *Volksgemeinschaft* in an unfavorable light, but it is not their status as censored films per se that makes them so interesting. Rather it is their ability as problem films to capture the spirit of the time, reveal its dilemmas, and lend insights into how individuals dealt with social problems beyond their control. A common feature of these problem films is that they leave the viewer with haunting images of unfulfilled passions, senseless brutality, and dissatisfaction with the status quo. Attached to these stories of wasted lives is often an unconvincing happy ending. Whether an appeasement strategy for the censor or a cynical device to highlight unresolved social issues, this incongruity leaves a disturbing aftertaste and beckons the viewer to contemplate alternative endings. The characters in these films do not conform to Nazi expectations of heroic warriors and self-sacrificing mothers. Young men are often weak and passive; older men can be petty tyrants obsessed with order and hierarchy. Young women resolutely insist on meeting their sexual and economic needs; older women often remember their hopes despite years of compromise. Far from embodying party slogans, the characters voice discontent with everyday life and imagine a world where things are different. As Thomas Schärer has convincingly argued, these films “destroy illusions and identification and call norms and values into question, instead of reinforcing them, for example gender roles. They do not place viewers via identification opportunities uniformly in society like most films in the Nazi period did in order to neutralize potential calls for change.”⁵

Das Leben kann so schön sein, *Der verzauberte Tag*, and *Via Mala* are stylistically innovative, provocative, and illustrate particularly well both the aspirations and the limitations of cinema in the Third Reich. All three films underwent state supervision and original approval, including pre-censorship of the treatment and script, careful oversight during the shooting, and an orchestrated pre-release advertising campaign before being completed and eventually banned. Considering the extensive resources utilized and the publicity invested in these films, they were expected to channel the discussion about contemporary society in a way that conformed to the state’s ideologi-

cal agenda. Unfortunately, *Das Leben kann so schön sein*, *Der verzauberte Tag*, and *Via Mala* are not available in commercial release in Germany or the United States and have not received sufficient scholarly attention. In this chapter I explore how these three films reflect a growing dissatisfaction with the status quo and the pressing need to find genuine solutions to social problems. These films are products of their time and chart a shift away from concrete economic issues to the more elusive areas of emotional and existential conflicts. *Das Leben kann so schön sein* bears the markings of 1938 Germany, a time when workers struggled to win the long-touted material success but were consumed by fears of an imminent catastrophe. *Der verzauberte Tag* echoes the harsher reality of 1943–1944, a post-Stalingrad war-weary society where women faced economic hardship alone and fantasized about love while violence entered into everyday life. *Via Mala* reflects the terror of 1944–1945 and the quandary of postwar Germany, the relentless violence inflicted upon innocent victims and the questions of collective guilt and an unmastered past.

Consumerist Fantasies: *Das Leben kann so schön sein* (1938)

Das Leben kann so schön sein is a serious drama about a young couple whose marriage is nearly destroyed by financial troubles and unrealistic expectations. Lighthearted moments and the casting of comedian Rudi Godden and girl-next-door Ilse Werner as the sympathetic couple helped to mitigate the film's critique of modern marriage, housing, and employment. The relatively young and inexperienced director Rolf Hansen encountered resistance early on and the film underwent several name changes, highlighting its problematic nature from the start.⁶ The titles waver between a bleak portrait of economic hardship and a rosy picture of married life: *The Last Trading Day of the Month* became *A Person is born*, then *Happiness in Installments*, and finally *Life can be so Wonderful*.⁷

Das Leben kann so schön sein passed the censor in Berlin on December 20, 1938, and premiered at the Opernkino in Vienna three days later on December 23, 1938.⁸ Goebbels normally viewed important films before their premiere and could censor any film he considered harmful to National Socialist sensibilities. In December 1938, Goebbels was preoccupied with his own personal life and spent little time overseeing film production or the propaganda ministry. Ordered by Hitler to forsake his mistress Lida Baarova and reconcile with his wife Magda, Goebbels's life at this point reads like a melodramatic filmscript. With the propaganda minister otherwise engaged, *Das Leben kann so schön sein* was shown directly to Adolf Hitler who broke off the screening and banned the film. Hitler was reportedly enraged by the depiction of a housing shortage and

the overall tone of the film.⁹ On January 3, 1939, the Ufa board of directors attributed the ban to the film's "potential to sabotage the government's population growth policies."¹⁰ Despite Hansen's attempt to edit the film, Goebbels issued a press directive on January 5, 1939, stating: "The Ufa film *Das Leben kann so schön sein* has been banned. It contradicts National Socialist population growth policies and to some extent directly opposes them."¹¹ Hansen's film did not premiere in Germany proper until after the war.¹²

The film opens in a hospital, where the young insurance salesman Hannes Kolb (Rudi Godden) awaits word on the condition of his pregnant wife Nora (Ilse Werner) who fell down the stairs after a heated argument. In a series of flashbacks, Hannes recounts their courtship and troubled marriage. The young lovers dream of owning their own home on a quiet lake, a bright and cheerful place far from the watchful eyes of strangers. Visiting a new housing tract, they imagine a life together in this idyllic setting, but their hopes are shattered by economic reality. Hannes convinces Nora that they lack the financial security to marry, let alone buy a house. He eventually gathers the courage to propose, but he wants Nora to be a working wife and take a job as a seamstress in a clothing factory. Despite her wish for an apartment with simple modern furniture, he insists they rent a single furnished room in a boarding-house. The dark and dreary building, the close quarters with vexing neighbors, and the constant talk of financial problems put a strain on the marriage. When Nora tells Hannes she is pregnant, he becomes paralyzed with fear. Hoping she can calm his worries about their future, Nora eventually lies and says she made a mistake and is not expecting. Hannes is consumed with visions of disaster and neglects his wife. His passivity and jealousy drive her to action. She reveals that she is seven months pregnant and packs her bag to leave but falls down a flight of stairs. After the final flashback, Hannes admits his guilt and vows to start anew. He has decided that Nora will quit her job and stay home with the baby in a bright new apartment filled with her own furniture. After delivering a healthy boy, the couple silently reconciles. In the last frame, Nora comforts her husband saying: "Don't cry, Hannes. Now everything's going to be all right."¹³

In a series of interviews conducted in the fall of 1938, Rolf Hansen cautioned that *Das Leben kann so schön sein* would be a daring experiment in both form and content. The film would challenge viewers with its complex narrative told in flashbacks and with characters who were "people of our time, resembling us and occupied with our fate. Their problems and existential questions are not located in no man's land, but rather are experienced and suffered by us daily, hourly."¹⁴ Hansen recognized that his film might be a hard sell because it did not offer the typical escapist fare found in many feature films: "It is always a problematic matter to show the public a film that leads them back into their own everyday life. And so plainly and realistically as we are planning to do. After all, people want to be distracted and find some illusions when they go to

the movies in the evening.”¹⁵ The director hoped viewers would see themselves and their daily struggles honestly reflected on screen. Ultimately, the audience would need to accept the film on its own terms: “The success of this film, which does not gloss over or romanticize life, let alone trivialize it, can only depend on its realism and truthfulness.”¹⁶

In striking contrast to other films made around this time, *Das Leben kann so schön sein* deals frankly with the controversial themes of married working women and the underemployment of men.¹⁷ The main characters, a factory worker and a white-collar employee, are ordinary people with a typical problem: they do not know how to make ends meet. Their story represents the plight of many married couples in the 1930s. When the NSDAP came to power in 1933 at the height of the Great Depression, six million German workers were unemployed. In its first two years in office, the party launched a series of campaigns against married working women and promoting full employment of men.¹⁸ The Law to Decrease Unemployment (June 1, 1933) called for “employment of female factory workers in households, as far as possible, in order to replace them with men in the factories.”¹⁹ The same law introduced marriage loans as a means to increase the number of marriages, raise the birth rate of racially pure Aryans, and fight against “double-earners,” families with both spouses working. Interest-free marriage loans of 1,000 RM were granted to couples on the condition that the wife quit her job. The loan was not paid out in cash but in vouchers for household goods and furniture. One-fourth of the loan was automatically repaid with the birth of each child. Numerous private companies, factories, and banks joined the government in providing financial incentives (loans or severance pay) for married women to leave the workforce and return full-time to the “natural” role of wife and mother. By 1936 the government’s hostility toward double-earners abated due to necessity. The country had reached full employment and even suffered a labor shortage in such key sectors as the armament industry. At the same time Hitler demanded that the economy prepare for war within the next four years. Married women were now considered essential to the labor force and encouraged to continue working. Accordingly, in 1937 the law was amended so that married women were not required to give up their job as a precondition for a marriage loan.

Nora’s job as a seamstress in a clothing factory may seem like a minor detail, but it is highly representative of female employment patterns in peacetime Germany. Employed in the textile industry where women comprised about half the workforce, Nora shares the fate of many young wives in 1938. Like the majority of married working women, she only takes on a job because her husband’s income is insufficient to cover living expenses.²⁰ Despite Nazi propaganda trumpeting motherhood, the number of married working women actually rose from 35% in 1933 to 41% in 1939, with the vast majority taking on low-paid factory work.²¹ And even though married women were officially

encouraged to join the workforce in 1938, the social stigma attached to being a “double-earner” remained strong. Hannes, for example, insists that Nora lie to everyone in the factory and pretend to be single because he fears that she will be fired if her boss finds out she is married. The movie’s plotline illustrates the disparity between propaganda and embedded social values, the government’s call to change attitudes based on the state’s immediate needs and the people’s inability to modify entrenched beliefs so quickly.

As an insurance salesman, Hannes is a white-collar employee without sufficient financial security to start a family. Since he is new to the job, he must prove himself by reaching a high sales quota before he will be granted his own sales district and a guaranteed monthly income. He estimates that he will initially have to write thirty policies a month to earn 150 RM but an apartment will run 50 RM and food 60 RM, so they will have only 40 RM for the rest of their living expenses.²² Unfortunately Hannes is not able to meet his quota and his wages fall below those of the average worker and head of a four-member household who earned 157 RM monthly.²³ His frantic worries about how to make ends meet, while presented in a sympathetic and often humorous light to suggest he is overreacting, nonetheless reflect the real-life financial hardship facing many workers and white-collar employees. To ensure full employment and rearm the nation, the Nazi government instituted an economic policy that sought to freeze wages, set price controls, and limit overall consumer expenditures. Despite the government’s efforts to maintain stable wages and prices, the cost of living index rose by 6% between 1933 and 1938.²⁴

Along with its critical look at employment, *Das Leben kann so schön sein* addresses the problem of housing. The film describes two radically different social environments: a single-family home in a suburban settlement and a boarding-house in a downtown Berlin apartment building. The former is a cheerful private space beyond the economic means of the average office worker, while the latter is a dismal communal space where the lower middle class must abide. Although Hansen’s film does not openly criticize the Nazi party or any government agency for the housing conditions, it implies that workers still suffer from economic hardship and that the government has not done enough to raise the standard of living. The question of suitable housing goes well beyond financial issues and evokes the deeper need for privacy. It also challenges the National Socialist government’s ability to balance two apparently opposite domestic agendas, what Hans-Dieter Schäfer has called “the divided consciousness” of the Third Reich. On the one hand, National Socialism presented itself as a meticulously organized system that offered the masses a sense of wholeness through participation in communal rituals and threatened violent retribution against nonconformity. On the other hand, it promoted itself as an agent of continuity that guaranteed the masses a private sphere in which to enjoy some degree of individualism and a wide assortment of consumer goods and entertainment.

The model house on a beautiful lake is an unobtainable dream for the young seamstress and salesman. At Nora's urging, they pretend they are happily married and living in their own home. In a close-up of her glowing face resting on Hannes's shoulder, Nora voices her innermost desire for domestic bliss, "When we're married, then it has to be wonderful. As wonderful as one can ask from life. It has to be true happiness!"²⁵ Nora's dream includes not only a loving relationship but also a private sphere shielded against outsiders. Sitting at the breakfast table, the couple relishes the solitude: "This is the first time no one can disturb us, where we are truly alone!" They fantasize that they can lock the door and be completely insulated. Nora promises Hannes, "When we finally have our own home, I won't let anybody in! It has to belong to us alone!" In desperation and "with a wild expression of hunger on her face," Nora pleads, "When, Hannes, when?"²⁶

Only in nature does the couple momentarily capture the feeling of being sheltered. Nestled together in a rowboat on a lake at sunset, Hannes and Nora find the privacy they desperately long for, but their contentment does not last long. Hannes starts counting pennies and worries about how they



Contentment in nature: *Das Leben kann so schön sein.*

can earn enough money to pay for living expenses. He tells Nora they will have to wait to marry until he can guarantee their financial security: "We have to think about the future. And we have to pay premiums on it as with any insurance. And if people like us don't have money for it . . ." Nora finishes the thought: "we pay for it with happiness."²⁷

The stark reality is that the newlyweds cannot afford to own their own home. Instead they move into a dreary turn-of-the-century boarding-house with a dark paneled entryway, oriental rugs, and heavy curtains. The dimly lit rooms are cluttered with massive, old-fashioned furniture, and the thin walls let the neighboring tenants hear everything from the toilet flushing to a lover's quarrel. Characteristic of the oppressive air surrounding this place is the safety chain that always bars the front door. There is no private realm where the individual can develop, where one can have a private conversation in bed, make a cup of tea, have a fight, or cook a meal alone.

In an effort to alleviate the severe housing shortage, the Nazi government promoted privately funded construction and subsidized its own housing projects, but the supply never met the demand. By 1938 there was still a severe housing shortage.²⁸ The construction of single-family homes in model settlements like the one featured in *Das Leben kann so schön sein* was widely publicized but actually only comprised about one-tenth of all new housing.²⁹ The majority of new housing starts consisted of multiple-family homes and apartment buildings, but the regime continued to propagate the idea that it would provide more and more Germans with a detached house in a village setting. As cultural critic Peter Reichel has noted, the government routinely conjured up "images that suggested a low cost of living and high quality of life: health, self-sufficiency, family idyll, and tranquility in home sweet home."³⁰

Settlement construction (*Siedlungsbau*), planned communities of single, double, and multiple family houses, began in the nineteenth century as a way to provide urban workers with low-cost housing and growing industries with a stable workforce. When the NSDAP seized power in 1933, it continued to support settlement construction as part of the overall strategy to combat massive unemployment and a severe housing shortage.³¹ In this early stage, settlements were designed primarily for unemployed and low-income workers and emphasis was placed on self-sufficiency. By 1935 however, workers were required to be employed. The modest homes were often equipped with stalls for small farm animals, vegetable garden plots, and a tool shed. Officials recognized that creating a positive living environment was good for workers, industry, and the state. Workers could enjoy a comfortable and practical living space, a healthy lifestyle with outdoor activities, pride in ownership, privacy, and social status. Industries considered the most reliable and productive employees to be a settled workforce attached to the land with a vested interest in having a steady income. The state also benefited from its role as facilitator, providing a grateful citizenry with strong ties to the local community and industry. Workers who

possessed a stable home environment and economic security were also more likely to have children and provide the state with new citizens.

The National Socialists were quick to promote the idea that settlement housing was part and parcel of their efforts to raise the average worker's social status, level class differences, and dislodge the long-standing prejudice against the urban poor and the unskilled laborer. In an article in the journal *Soziale Bauwirtschaft* from 1935, settlements were lauded as an indispensable means to create a harmonious, classless society:

These settlement houses are not huts; they are a home of one's own, like the ones that previously could only be built by well-off burghers. The workers who move into these houses and live in these settlements are no longer proletarians. They join the ranks of farmers, artisans, and burghers. The worker is no longer a despised foreign body standing at the unemployment office, but instead a national comrade in the community of creators.³²

The rehabilitation of the worker, his transformation from a contaminant invading the sacrosanct national body to a contributing member of a select fellowship, takes place in the same discursive tradition that National Socialism continually employed to define its citizens and its enemies. Settlement housing guaranteed not only the redistribution of wealth but also the redress of a social injustice by elevating the worker to his rightful position in the national community.

The widespread desire to own a home was not only a response to material necessity; it was also the need to retreat from a highly structured public sphere, a life centered on uniforms, party insignia, political organizations, social responsibilities, and the watchful eye of the Gestapo. While the Nazi regime refashioned German cities using massive architectural structures to reflect the state's hegemony and grandeur, private individuals increasingly chose to decorate their homes in nineteenth-century Biedermeier and traditional folk interior designs to gain a sense of homeliness and intimacy.³³ Historian Detlev Peukert explains the far-reaching effects of Nazi architecture on the ordinary citizen: "The monumental public spaces, resembling stage sets, reduced people into mere ornament; the individual was lost within huge perspectives that could be filled only if he was merged into a marching column. The desire to retreat into the private sphere, into comfortable and familiar small spaces, was therefore all the more pressing."³⁴ Viewed within this cultural context, Hannes's assertion that in 1938 he cannot afford the 15,000 RM settlement home contradicts Nazi propaganda and reflects a serious lack of faith in the government's ability to deliver on its promises.

An important aspect of the retreat into the family and home was the government's promise of affordable, high-quality household goods and a better standard of living.³⁵ National Socialism wanted to radically alter Ger-

man society by establishing a racial state, but it also sought to guarantee its citizens stability, continuity, and “the sense that inside their own four walls their lives basically remained unchanged.”³⁶ The government’s racial and imperialist aims coexisted with an explicit assurance of a politically free zone filled with consumer products. Although one-fifth of the gross national product was devoted to the rearmament industry in 1938, the production of consumer goods that same year rose to its highest point since 1928.³⁷ The government took full credit for Germany’s rapid recovery from the Great Depression (in 1936 Germany reached full employment and matched its industrial output of 1928/29) and continually publicized that German industries were manufacturing everything from washing machines and vacuum cleaners to electric stoves and coffee machines. Despite periodic shortages and the often prohibitively high price of many household appliances, the return to a pre-depression standard of living and the prospect of acquiring durable goods in the near future did much to bolster Hitler’s popularity.³⁸

Das Leben kann so schön sein prominently features both the promise and the limits of working class consumerism. Nora spends her days working in a factory sewing women’s lingerie and dreaming about decorating her home. She takes her husband window-shopping because she longs for simple, well-made, modern household furnishings. In keeping with the fashion of the day, she chooses light and practical furniture made of German fir and ash.³⁹ Demonstrating that she will be an efficient housewife, Nora admires a highly functional kitchen cabinet and gushes, “if a man only knew what that means to a woman.”⁴⁰ The furniture for the entire house is 750 RM and can be purchased with a marriage loan.⁴¹ But this too is out of their reach, and Hannes convinces Nora that they must settle for less. Hannes refuses to take on any debt because he fears he cannot pay it back. He does not want a marriage loan, even though Nora does not have to quit her job to qualify and since she is pregnant one-fourth of the loan is automatically repaid, because he has no confidence in the future and fears a downward spiral into penury. His only concession is to give Nora a sewing box, a piece of furniture she considers a pure luxury but which symbolizes the domestication of her labor. Nora cherishes this gift because it represents her dream of being a wife and mother, sewing clothes for her family at home and not for strangers in a factory.

The Ufa studio proposed an advertising campaign that would tie in contemporary consumer culture with the movie’s plot. The studio advised theater owners: “Looking for and buying furniture, those are things that play a big role in the life of everyone who wants to get married! An entire series of scenes in this film treat Hannes and Nora’s plans, which continually revolve around exactly these things. Considering this fact, one could surely make a deal with a big furniture company to carry out an effective, reciprocal advertising campaign.”⁴² In this early form of product placement, the Ufa studio hoped that it could channel the public’s consumerist fantasies into

interest for its own product, *Das Leben kann so schön sein*. The studio even suggested that theater owners contact the local city hall to get the names and addresses of couples who had recently married so that they could mail an advertisement to this target group.

While consumerism might resonate with viewers as a contemporary issue, the characters seem outdated. The boarding-house occupants are a ragtag group of lost souls who resemble cliché figures from the hated *Systemzeit*. The downwardly mobile elderly couple, the bohemian musician, the flapper, the dandy, and the petty bureaucrat seem better suited to a film set in the 1920s than one that claims to be about contemporary German life in 1938. Screenwriter Jochen Huth admitted that his original play dealt with an earlier time period and a different set of social issues: "When this play came to the stage years ago it was very closely connected to the problem of unemployment. [. . .] Today this question is no longer relevant due to the fortunate change of circumstances."⁴³ Regardless of whether or not Huth was skilled enough to adapt his characters to a later time frame or choose to retain outdated figures as a way to mitigate criticism of the present by implying that they were stuck in the past, he did not provide the audience with positive role models. None of the characters is living out his dreams. Some have resolved to accept defeat and adapt to limitations; others firmly believe in future success. Despite their differences, they share a need for order and meaning in a chaotic world. All the characters adopt a life strategy to protect themselves and gain a sense of security.

Among the boarders, the postal official Meier is the most obsessed with order. Meier organizes everything from the use of the bathroom, kitchen, and telephone to the coat rack where each peg has an assigned name card. When one boarder stays in the shower longer than the allotted fifteen minutes and messes up the carefully planned schedule, Meier fears the loss of control will lead to "squabbles, quarrels, hostilities, anarchy, chaos!"⁴⁴ The manicurist Ellen adopts a different strategy; she looks for security in money and hopes to marry a rich man. The traveling salesman Dewitt finds comfort in the certainty that he can sell his wares to anyone and in his "bachelor's pad which naturally includes the unavoidable Turkish smoking table and countless photos of scantily clad young women with guaranteed flawless morals."⁴⁵ The middle-aged piano teacher Fräulein Grün takes refuge in astrology and believes that destiny is written in the stars. She relies on the steadfast rules of the horoscope to guide her and reads Hannes's destiny with amazing accuracy: "You are a Gemini. Uncertain, irresolute, whooping with joy, deadly sad. Prone to weakness, more cowardly than courageous. More head than heart. Very cautious. And on the whole, not born under a lucky star."⁴⁶ When Hannes asks what he can do about it, she replies with utmost certainty, "Nothing!"

The kind, old-fashioned landlady Sophie von Klützner functions as the voice of experience and encourages Nora to accept limitations as part of life.

When Sophie and her husband Eduard lost all their savings in the hyperinflation of 1923, they decided to rent out their home “so that one knows where one belongs.” Sophie continues, “It wasn’t simple at first. We imagined things so differently. But everything turned out okay. You get used to everything. Life isn’t always easy, but love, you know, love helps you get over so much. Then you can put up with a lot.”⁴⁷ If the young girl is flexible and lowers her material expectations, she can expect love and personal contentment as her reward. Sophie consoles Nora, “Everything comes with time. You are still so young. The best things are ahead of you. And for a happy, loving couple even the smallest hut has enough room.”⁴⁸ Nora conforms to this rule and goes along with her husband’s demand that they save every penny, but Hannes does not fulfill his part of the bargain.

Hannes is so insecure and fearful that he does not know how to respond to Nora’s conjecture, “life could be so wonderful.” Tired of his passivity, Nora literally takes the rudder of their boat and tries to build up his ego. She pleads with him, “Have more confidence in yourself. Have a little courage. It isn’t dangerous. You only have to take a chance, be brave, Hannes. . . . You have to believe in yourself.”⁴⁹ In the course of the film, Hannes never seems to learn this lesson, to believe in himself (and by extension the government). His fears are so deeply rooted, so convincing, that it is difficult to believe in his total conversion at the end of the film. Nora’s final comment that he should not cry is hardly reassuring. This passive male character is the antithesis of the model Nazi hero; he is “a person who has lost his nerve out of sheer worry, in the end no longer believes in his own capacity for work and is almost destroyed by his lack of courage to go on living.”⁵⁰ While Hitler, Goebbels, and the Ufa board of directors did not directly criticize the character of Hannes, their censure of this film based on “population growth policies” is implicitly a rejection of male impotency. Nazi cinema rarely if ever featured men lacking self-control and determination as the protagonists of serious dramas.

Hannes’s reaction to the news that he will soon be a father marks him as a weakling. On the anniversary of their engagement and first sexual encounter, Nora tells Hannes she is pregnant. He stares at her silently until the light goes out of his eyes, and his smile turns to stunned panic. The music turns downbeat as Nora registers his disappointment and mirrors it. Hannes does not conform to the expected behavior of a married man in a state where procreation of racially fit Aryan babies was considered every healthy citizen’s primary duty. Hannes’s failure as a father, his reluctance to accept Nora’s pregnancy and give her the support she needs as an expectant mother, goes against one of the highest principles of National Socialism: the mother cult.

In the working world Hannes is equally weak and ineffective. In a flashback he meekly tells his boss that as a family man he needs a promotion and a raise. The scene has a nightmarish quality. It opens with the general director (Kurt Seifert) sitting at his desk surrounded by darkness, but the camera

tracks in quickly, the light behind the desk suddenly illuminates an immense stained glass window in the background, and a secretary walks into the room. As if waking from a dream into reality, the unnatural lighting and props shift to a more conventional setting. The oblique camera work, however, signals that this reality is as bizarre as any dream. The obese director, who bears a remarkable resemblance to a Georg Grosz caricature, is filmed at an extremely low angle making him look abnormally huge and domineering, while the slender Hannes is seated in an oversized armchair filmed at a high angle rendering him small and insignificant. As the scene ends, a low-angle camera moves into a close-up of the smiling director, so that his gigantic face fills the entire screen while the space surrounding him goes dark.

The director's condescending smirk fades to black, but it leaves a haunting afterimage accompanied by the shrill sounds of a piccolo. In a rapid series of shots, the siren-like music follows Hannes as he climbs up and down flights of stairs, runs down endless streets, and jumps in and out of trains, constantly moving in different directions. He frantically pleads with his potential customers: "Life today is so dangerous. Don't you read the newspapers? Just imagine all the things that can happen to you. And what can you do about it? Absolutely nothing. Accident and burglary, fire and sickness. On every corner bad luck is just waiting for you to come along. You could slip on a banana peel."⁵¹ His sales pitch is accompanied by a montage of a woman falling on a banana peel, a dead man on the floor next to a butcher knife, a car crash, a thief breaking into a wall, a fire, a man carried on a stretcher, newspaper articles on natural catastrophes, floods, and a train crash. Laughter fills the last frames of Hannes's apocalyptic vision, and the flames slowly dissolve into the image of a cheerful old man tending sunflowers in his garden. In a heavy Berlin accent, the old man dismisses Hannes as a doomsayer, "No way. If I thought like you, then I'd never stop paying. And what would I get for my trouble? Nothin' but worry. I'm not afraid anymore. I know about life." Turning the tables, the old man asks Hannes, "Are you insured?," to which the insurance salesman must admit he is not.⁵² In this scene, so rare in Nazi cinema because it shows the random violence of everyday life, two opposing worldviews clash; pessimism is contrasted with optimism, images of cataclysm with those of contentment, and a fearful youth with a secure older generation. And while mature characters like the elderly gardener, Sophie and Eduard von Klützner, and Nora's uncle espouse a confidently sanguine world outlook and playfully berate Hannes, it is the specter of youthful fear that lingers and is never convincingly resolved.

The depiction of a frightened young man, unable to accept financial or emotional responsibility for his wife and child, is a criticism that goes to the core of the carefully fashioned masculine identity in Nazi Germany. The triad hero image of the soldier-worker-farmer is a man of action and resolve. Hannes recognizes that he does not fit the mold. When the manicurist Ellen

admits that living in the boarding-house in such close proximity has destroyed her illusions about men, Hannes retorts, "We men only exist in your illusions! If you need them, go to the movies."⁵³ In this striking moment of self-reflectivity, when a movie character criticizes the believability of a movie character, the audience is made aware of how the media disseminate unrealistic masculine images.

Nora is much better at conforming to the idealistic standards of female sacrifice and self-abnegation, but she cannot completely suppress her own wishes and individuality. When the demands become overwhelming she complains: "sometimes I get so fed up!" and later "Oh, sometimes I'd like to scream."⁵⁴ Nora is willing to accept a meager material existence but she needs her husband to protect and shield her emotionally from others. Unfortunately Hannes hides from trouble and lets Nora fight their battles. She protests: "But you always let me fight it out on my own. You never stand up for me Hannes. You always let me do everything alone."⁵⁵ Even at work she must bear an unfair emotional burden. Since Hannes fears Nora will lose her job if she admits to being married, he insists that she lie to everyone at work and pretend to be single. When her boss asks her out to coffee, she feels obligated to go. Hannes follows them into the coffee shop but never gathers the courage to confront the other man. At home he launches into a jealous rage. Nora is stunned and asks: "Why do you leave me so terribly alone to deal with everything?"⁵⁶ After Hannes kicks her sewing box, his gift symbolizing her dreams of luxury and domestic happiness as well as his willingness to compromise, she decides to leave him. This simple act of cruelty represents for Nora the last straw, a clear indication that Hannes will not invest in their marriage or their future as a family.

The film concludes with a happy ending so neat and clean that it stretches the limits of believability. When Hannes hears the news that Nora has given birth to a son, he becomes a changed man. Beaming with confidence and joy he marches off to see his wife and child accompanied by the swells of triumphant music as if to suggest the heralding of a king. The doctor remarks that this sudden transformation is typical: "With every birth two human beings are born! The child and the father!"⁵⁷ A close-up of the newborn contentedly sucking his thumb is followed by the smiles of the happy parents. The final shot is a close-up of Nora's tear-stained face as she comforts her husband with the words: "Don't cry Hannes, now everything will be alright." This happy ending echoes the assessment of the working class in Nazi Germany as noted in the secret reports of the outlawed Social Democratic Party (Sopade): "Strength through Joy seems to prove that the solution to social problems can be avoided, if one gives the worker more 'honor' instead of more wages, more 'joy' instead of more free time, more petty bourgeois self-esteem instead of better working and living conditions."⁵⁸



Female Desire and the Gaze: *Der verzauberte Tag* (1943–1944)

Peter Pewas's first full-length feature film *Der verzauberte Tag* tells the story of a young girl who wants to break free from social and economic limitations and experience life to its fullest. The film, based on Franz Nabl's short story "Die Augen" (The Eyes), was shot at the Ufa studios in Babelsberg between June and October 1943, and after several delays a finished film was sent to the propaganda ministry on July 1, 1944. Pewas's film immediately came under scrutiny. In an unusual move, Goebbels arranged a viewing of the film on July 6, 1944 in the propaganda ministry's air-raid shelter, where it was widely criticized. From the summer of 1944 until January 1945, *Der verzauberte Tag* was repeatedly slated for changes, and while the film was never officially banned, it was also never edited to the propaganda ministry's satisfaction and did not premiere in Nazi Germany.⁵⁹

Peter Pewas (pseudonym for Walter Schulz, 1904–1984) came to film with an extensive and varied artistic background. After an apprenticeship in metal work and a lengthy period wandering through Tyrol, he studied at the Bauhaus school in Weimar, working closely with Moholy-Nagy, Klee, and Kandinsky. He made a name for himself as a graphic artist designing film

advertisements and was credited with developing the “filmic poster style” (filmischer Plakatstil), which used colors, forms, and photomontage in striking new ways. He joined the first students at the new German Film Academy in Babelsberg where he studied direction, screenwriting, acting, lighting, and photography. The director of the academy, Professor Wolfgang Liebeneiner, became his mentor and hired him as an assistant for the state-sponsored propaganda films *Bismarck* (1940) and *Ich klage an* (1941). Pewas was considered a talented newcomer who could develop an innovative visual style and treat contemporary issues with the realism Goebbels wanted from the problem film. The Ufa studio hoped Pewas could fulfill Goebbels’s mandate by making a film that did “not escape from daily hardship and lose itself in a dreamland that only exists in the minds of starry-eyed directors and scriptwriters but nowhere else on earth.”

In a series of interviews published in 1943, the young director discussed his eagerness to create a new type of film, one that would challenge viewers by demanding a critical distance reminiscent of Brechtian aesthetics. Pewas argued in favor of objective and analytical observation over the classical cinema’s reliance on identification and its erasure of all evidence testifying to its status as constructed reality. He maintained: “This film does not show beautiful people but rather real human beings. *Der verzauberte Tag* should not distract but rather collect and stimulate.”⁶⁰ Pewas saw his film as pioneering work: “We are creating a film here which in a certain sense will bring a new view to scenery and photography. We should avoid, and I want to emphasize this from the start, glamorous delusions and love play. I resolutely want to steer away from any superficiality. The plot, which is characterized by strong and healthy feelings, obliges me in my efforts. It is a matter of illustrating the actions of a young person who has to be transported out of a petty bourgeois atmosphere.”⁶¹

Der verzauberte Tag begins in a hospital where the young Christine Schweiger (Winnie Markus) lies unconscious with the artist Albrecht Götz (Hans Stüwe) at her side. A narrator sets the stage for her story, which is told in a single flashback. Christine and her neighbor Anni work at a newspaper stand in the train station but dream of having a more exciting life, traveling, falling in love, finding romance and wealth. Spring is in the air and both girls yearn for change. Christine breaks off her engagement to the narrow-minded accountant Krummholz despite her mother’s fears for her future. Anni has invented a fiancé named Maximilian and is thrilled when the handsome stranger Emil is willing to play the part of her fairy tale lover. After Anni learns that Emil is a con man wanted by the police, she turns to Stationmaster Wasner for comfort, and although both of them want someone else, they settle for each other. A mysterious stranger also changes Christine’s life. One day she sees Albrecht Götz staring at her from a train, and their mutual gaze is so intense that Christine believes they are destined to fall in love. The next

day she receives roses from an anonymous admirer and sees Götz again, so she agrees to drive out into the country with him. They spend an enchanted day together among the blossoming trees and make love that night. Christine is devastated to learn that Götz did not send her flowers nor did he see her that first day at the train station; he was actually reading the letters on the newsstand to gauge the extent of an eye injury. Believing that fate has played a cruel trick on her, she runs away. Alone on the street at night, she is accosted by a one-eyed man and then shot by Krummholz in a drunken, jealous rage. Returning to the present, Christine awakens in the hospital where Götz professes his love in a dramatic, if unconvincing, happy ending.

Startling images, remarkable photography and lighting, symbolic props, and the skillful use of space dominate this film and take precedent over plot and dialogue. The narrator's opening monologue, spoken by director Pewas in the slow and measured cadence of poetry, sets the mood:

It is springtime. Overnight a warm rain fell and brought out the last blossoms. The trees stir, and the fountains are in high spirits, the birds are singing, and desire is everywhere. Through these panes it is quiet. Here lies a young person, Christine, wondrously transformed by spring and now destroyed. She is feverish. Her hands search for a letter that fell out of her coat pocket in the night of the misfortune, as people are calling it. The nurse found it long ago. The stranger takes it and is alarmed. Almost hesitantly he sees his address. He opens it. Sinking into another world he reads about a spring day when a disaster was brewing fatefully and silently like the shadow of a cloud.⁶²

The ethereal quality of a cloud's shadow poignantly describes the vague dissatisfaction and restless yearning afflicting the characters in *Der verzauberte Tag*. The film is both a fairy tale of desire and a sober tale of harsh reality. The characters live in their own world and rarely, if ever, connect with their fellow human beings. Like the numerous train tracks pictured in this film, there are many parallel realities that seldom intersect. The men and women need from each other exactly what the other is not willing or able to give. One man wants a sweet and innocent virgin, another wants a passionate carefree lover, and a third wants a faithful servant, but they all want a woman who meets their needs without making any demands of her own. The women worry about money and how to make ends meet, but they also crave romance and passion. They waver between waiting for Prince Charming and settling for Mr. Right-Now with the prospects of a pension.

The two young salesgirls are caught in a restrictive social environment but yearn for freedom and adventure, which lie beyond the horizon. Contained in their newsstand but surrounded by the allure of travel, they watch the trains go by and dream of being whisked away to another realm. Christine and Anni use different strategies to escape from everyday life and find an

outlet for their sexual desires. Anni uses fantasy, inventing a noble lover who will arrive any day now to take her away. She steadfastly refuses to accept her bleak existence: living in a modest rented room, forced to pawn her underwear, hungry for a piece of meat, starved for affection, and working in a job without much prospect for the future. The dark-haired Anni adopts a dark, erotic attitude and appearance, fashioning herself as a vamp in the hopes of seducing a rich man who will take care of her. At home she dons black lace slips, drapes herself in silk, feathers, and veils, and touches the lines of her figure as she admires her body in the mirror. At work she wears dresses with a provocative neckline, boasts about her make-believe boyfriend, and even sends herself flowers and letters to bolster her reputation as a desirable lover.



Anni and Christine at work in the newstand, *Der verzauberte Tag*.

The blond Christine represents the lighter model: healthy, natural, virginal. She lives with her widowed mother in a cramped apartment and gets up early to go swimming in the lake. Unlike Anni, Christine is not preoccupied with her appearance. Christine stands in her white slip with her back to the mirror and puts on a modest, high-collared dress for work. But she too is restless. When she brushes her hair and stretches, she seems like she could almost spring outside the confining walls and low ceiling of her tiny attic room. Whereas Anni has made up a wealthy lover, Christine is not exactly sure what she wants. She often daydreams, staring out into the empty space

off-camera and voicing an indeterminate desire for a different life. Invariably, each time she projects her desire into the void, a train whistle pierces through the daily grind and beckons her to far-off places.

One day at the train station, Christine expresses her vague longing, "Anni, do you sometimes feel the same way? You think, with the train now pulling in, something is coming that you have been waiting for the entire time. You don't know what it is, you can't really describe it. But you only know . . . anyway, you know this much, there has to be something else."⁶³ The composition of this scene reiterates in visual terms that Christine is at a crossroads and must choose a path. Myriad lines cross the screen and suggest the open possibilities for movement in limitless directions. Christine stands in the right foreground facing the camera but looking off slightly to the left where no one is standing. Behind her an elevated metal walkway traverses the top horizontal plane and in the center of the frame a train approaches the platform on an inverted v-shaped track. Even the lines of Christine's clothes, a light colored suit in a diamond-shaped pattern with a contrasting dark plaid collar and cuffs, make the eye move in different directions. Christine and her darker mirror image Anni hope to find the path that will lead them to a life of excitement and intrigue, passion and sexual fulfillment. Anni naïvely believes, "If you wish for something from the bottom of your heart, it will come true."⁶⁴ Christine is equally certain that love is the key: "For me it was simply the discovery that someone belongs to me. My life will take a whole new path."⁶⁵

Frau Schweiger hopes her daughter Christine will opt for financial security over romance and marry Rudolf Krummholz, a middle-aged accountant obsessed with order. Krummholz, whose name means crooked or bent piece of wood and alludes to male impotency, is a small man in both stature and attitude. Dressed in a prim three-piece suit complete with starched attached collar, bowler hat, and cane, his hair rigidly parted exactly down the middle, he is a caricature of the petty bureaucrat. At work he knows his proper place in the pecking order, dominating his underlings and kowtowing to his superiors. He tries to order his personal life in a similar manner by regulating his engagement to Christine in a business-like manner and even designing an hourly household work schedule for her to follow after they are married. Krummholz assures Christine that he does not need a wife who thinks, and he smugly observes to Frau Schweiger: "You can rear a young wife. You only have to help her settle into her duties as a housewife. By the way, nicely put, huh?"⁶⁶ Christine breaks off her engagement to Krummholz and places her hopes in the stranger Albrecht Götz, who can offer her the change she so desperately seeks.

Ironically, the artist Albrecht Götz is a man with distorted vision. He readily admits, "I see everything completely veiled."⁶⁷ His eyesight was nearly destroyed when a former lover threw acid in his face after he jilted her. However, Götz also suffers from a more general flawed vision in his sexual rela-

tionships. He views women as “speculators looking for the easiest life possible,” and sees himself as “an object of desire,” because he has made something out of his life.⁶⁸ Götz, whose name is derived from *Götze* meaning “idol,” is the object of extreme devotion but also a man who operates under fallacies and fails to see his numerous lovers as individuals. He is drawn to women and needs to possess them both physically and as images, because “for an artist a woman is the most interesting object. She is like nature, unfathomable, unpredictable, and full of secrets.”⁶⁹

Considering the emphasis placed on flawed male vision and image making, it is not surprising that *Der verzauberte Tag* also problematizes the female gaze. In a highly significant exchange of glances between Götz and Christine, she upsets the traditional gender-specific roles in the visual economy structuring sexual desire. In classical narrative cinema, as Laura Mulvey has shown, “pleasure in looking has been split between active/male and passive/female. The determining male gaze projects its fantasy onto the female figure, which is styled accordingly. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*.”⁷⁰ Mary Ann Doane has demonstrated that when this order is reversed, when woman assumes agency of the look and its corresponding subjectivity, she “poses a threat to an entire system of representation.” Doane maintains: “There is always a certain excessiveness, a difficulty associated with women who appropriate the gaze, who insist upon looking.” Classical cinema often solves this dilemma by punishing the display of excessive female desire with violence and even death because “the woman as subject of the gaze is clearly an impossible sign.”⁷¹

It is at the train station, a place where lives intersect and excessive female desire is repeatedly displayed, that Christine first sees Götz. In this scene Christine is transformed from the enthralled viewer of a romantic spectacle to the active pursuer of her own desire. After watching a couple kissing passionately on the platform, Christine notices that a man (Götz) is looking out of the train window in her direction. She misreads the situation and thinks he is staring at her. A series of shot/reverse shots from both characters’ point of view show that they are looking at different things. When Christine perceives that Götz is watching her, she does not demurely look away. Instead, her face lights up with a smile, and she returns his unwavering gaze. However, several shots from Götz’s point of view reveal that he does not see her at all and is actually trying to read the advertisement written on the kiosk. At the center of a shadowy black frame, the letters “Zeitschrift” (magazine) are slowly brought into focus and confirm that Götz is recovering from his eye injury. The next day, the scene is repeated and again gendered ways of seeing cause confusion. This time Götz sees Christine staring at him with longing and is so surprised by her active and fixed gaze that

jumps from the departing train to meet this woman who is openly seducing him. However, his first remark, "Have you ever been painted before?" highlights that Christine represents an untenable position, the subject of the gaze and the object of desire, the spectator and the image.⁷² Eventually disaster strikes because Christine fails to remain an image and insists upon giving her desire free reign. In essence, she refuses to acquiesce and accept her role as *Fräulein Schweiger*, or Miss Silent One as her name means in English.

The women in *Der verzauberte Tag* must make the difficult choice of either following their heart or ensuring that they are taken care of financially. Christine and Anni frequently worry about economic security, but they struggle against a system that forces them to marry a breadwinner instead of a lover. Both women refuse to be submissive and passively wait for a man to come along. Anni takes the initiative by consciously fashioning her public image as a desirable lover. Christine declines to marry a man she finds repugnant simply because he will provide her with a good standard of living, and she actively seduces Götz (albeit unwittingly). Ultimately both women will pay for their assertiveness and seductive poses by becoming the victims of a crime. When Anni tries to realize her ardent fantasy of being an alluring woman from a wealthy family, she is betrayed by Emil, who only romanced her in the hopes of stealing her money. After Christine tries to live out the dream of finding her soulmate in a chance encounter, she not only learns that Götz considers her merely a sexual adventure, she is also molested on the street, and finally shot by her spurned ex-fiancé.

Both women display an all-consuming passion that appears to be liberating but is mired in unrealistic ideals. While they uniformly refuse to conform and become passive, they also adhere to a highly sentimental view of love. Anni hopes to be swept off her feet by a fiery and dangerous stranger, while Christine believes that she is destined to meet the love of her life. These young women envision love in terms of a Harlequin romance, but as Anni's landlady remarks: "You can't live on perfect roses."⁷³ In the press package for *Der verzauberte Tag*, Christine is described as a self-absorbed young woman who invites disaster through her naïveté and refusal to accept reality: "[she] egotistically keeps on supplying nourishment to her daydreams from every possible incident in everyday life, until she no longer distinguishes between dream and reality and is drawn into an experience that almost takes a tragic end."⁷⁴ Much of these unrealistic expectations for love are linked to ideal images of femininity such as the one Anni encounters when she goes to a nightclub with "Maximilian" (Emil). Anni watches the stage as a ballerina holding a birdcage dances on a pedestal surrounded by mirrors. This silent and beautiful figure, lifted right out of a little girl's jewelry box, represents the lofty ideal of womanhood as captive spectacle. Put on a pedestal, imprisoned in a gilded cage, displayed as an image and a reflection, she is a lifeless and unobtainable ideal.

When Emil asks Anni why she has told everyone they are engaged and he is her “fairytale prince,” her response is “because I want it so very much.”⁷⁵ For the first time in the film, Anni is dressed in a modest black dress with a high-necked white collar and comes across as both vulnerable and honest. She drops her pretense, looks off into space, then closes her eyes and melts into Emil. Anni’s illusions are destroyed when she discovers that Emil is a marriage swindler. However, unlike Christine, Anni recognizes that her fantasies will probably never come true, and she contemplates a marriage of convenience. Stationmaster Wasner confesses that he has given up hope of winning Christine’s affection and has now fallen in love with Anni. When he proposes on their first date, Anni replies, “marriage? To be taken care of? It would be nice.” She hesitates at first to settle for security because she worries about what would happen if one day a dangerous stranger like her fictional Maximilian actually walked into her life. Wasner assures her “by then there will probably be children, and you will be older and calmer.”⁷⁶

In contrast to Anni’s sober assessment of marriage, Christine’s first date with Götz reaffirms her sentimental view of love. The couple drives out into the country, a place of bright sunshine, empty roads, and open fields. They are alone to enjoy the solitude and have a picnic among the blooming trees. Yet even in this idyllic setting, social and economic limitations define Christine’s existence. While Götz sketches her portrait and assures her he is listening, Christine talks about the lack of money and the need to work: “I’ve learned now from my mother what it means to be on your feet from morning till night and then worrying about the money needed.”⁷⁷ She laments the feminine condition and asks, “Why am I not a man? As a man you have the chance to realize the greatest ideas.”⁷⁸ Christine and Götz do not communicate with each other and seem to exist in parallel universes, but they dance together under the trees by moonlight in a scene of startling beauty that conveys sincere happiness and freedom.

Parallel to Christine’s rise is Krummholz’s fall. In a highly stylized scene, Krummholz is rejected and loses all sense of order. The original screenplay called for the scene to be staged in a realistic manner on the living room sofa, but Pewas transformed it into a cinematic tour de force with symbolic lighting, props, and optical effects. Pewas restaged the action to visualize the character’s psychological turmoil and mounting rage. Frau Schweiger stands in the foreground in an almost completely dark kitchen except for a single light from the stove, while Krummholz waits for her in the brightly lighted living room visible through the archway in the background. He enters the darkness and bends down to tend the fire just as Frau Schweiger announces that Christine does not want to marry him. Harsh light floods his face, the glowing ambers of the fire are reflected in his eyeglasses, and snaking plumes of smoke rise from a large pot of boiling water as the mother tells him: “Maybe she wants something else.”⁷⁹ Christine’s refusal to marry throws Krummholz into a downward spiral;

he tries to drown his sorrow in alcohol and the company of loose women but eventually lashes out at the woman who rejected him.

In a series of crosscuts to three different events transpiring simultaneously, the audience is shown how Krummholz, Anni, and Christine come to grips with the problem of unobtainable idealized love. Krummholz laments the loss of his ideal woman as he sits alone at the lake near the firing range (*Schießplatz*), surrounded by the sounds of barking dogs and gunshots. In a frantic attempt to block out his humiliation and anger, he stages a wild party in his rented room, dancing to “degenerate” jazz music and getting drunk with prostitutes. At the same time, Anni goes to the lake for a romantic walk with Stationmaster Wasner, and while she too mourns the loss of ideal love, she decides to settle for financial security. Finally, Christine returns to Götz’s home after a beautiful day in the countryside and is swept away by his polished seduction and even flattered when he remarks that she will be his first “Christine.” They make love offscreen to the sound of her breathing while the camera pans over his numerous artworks idealizing love and feminine beauty until it stops at a broken blossom on the glass table in front of her limp wrist. Just as Christine is deflowered, Krummholz’s forlorn image is suddenly reflected in the glass table, reminding the viewer that the fulfillment of one dream is the destruction of another. Afterwards Götz dangles a string over Christine and plays with her as if she were a cat. He is surprised she behaved so recklessly and became intimate with a man she hardly knew. Only now does Christine learn that Götz never saw her at the train station. He did not seek her out, send her flowers, and try to win her over. She is ashamed of herself because she now believes she behaved like a whore, seducing some unknown man with her unwavering gaze. She recognizes she was just an adventure for a man whose only concern is to finish the painting of his newest conquest.

Christine takes flight into the rainy night, but she cannot escape from her shame and disillusionment. The camera narrates her emotional turmoil with a montage of falling trees and roaring waves superimposed over her as she runs down the wet and deserted streets. She grasps a glistening chainlink fence just as the train whistle blows, bracing herself against the rush of emotions associated with this recurring piercing sound. Slowly she comes upon a bridge and stares out into the fog, while another montage of trains, tracks, smoke, and Götz’s face is superimposed upon the bleak and nearly suicidal scene. Christine finally makes her way to a café, where she writes Götz a letter explaining her motivations: “It was like a miracle. I am not reckless. I believed in the rule of destiny as something holy. You will understand me. Fate made a fool of me, for which I am ashamed. We can never see each other again.”⁸⁰

As Christine leaves the café, a one-eyed man grabs her on the street. When she defends herself against his unsolicited advances, his vitriolic retort is: “If you hang out on the street here at night, then you have to know what a man wants from you.”⁸¹ Again marked a whore by a man with flawed vision, Chris-

tine frees herself from his grasp and runs home only to find a drunken Krummholz waiting for her and shouting triumphantly, "I came to get what's rightfully mine."⁸² The scene takes on a nightmarish quality as the background suddenly turns black, the soundtrack goes silent, and Christine forcefully pushes him away. He orders her to stand still, and when she refuses to be a captive image, he shoots her. Krummholz staggers backwards and breaks a window, smashing the ornate portrait of a beautiful naked woman etched into the glass. Both Christine and the shattered image fall to the floor in ruins.



Krummholz attacks Christine: *Der verzauberte Tag*.

However, tragedy is averted and all the loose ends are resolved. While Christine lies unconscious in the hospital reliving her troubled memories and dreams in a montage superimposed over her feverish body, Krummholz is arrested and led off to prison. Götz rushes to Christine's side and reads her letter. He finally comes to his senses as Christine awakens. She looks at him and says: "the eyes," to which he replies: "Don't speak. I was blind, but now I see you as you are, as I love you."⁸³ Although the last shot shows the couple kissing, their relationship is still predicated on the controlling male gaze and the silent woman.

Unlike *Das Leben kann so schön sein*, *Der verzauberte Tag* does not portray everyday life with realistic details. Pewas's film does not cite exact wages,

prices, or consumer products, nor does it refer to specific government programs like marriage loans and settlement housing. The economic hardship of working women so typical of life in 1944 Germany is presented in more universal terms as part of the feminine condition. Christine learns from her widowed mother what it means to be the working poor, but there is no mention of such wartime burdens as ration stamps, shortages of food, clothing, and fuel, or the conscription of women into the Reich Labor Service (*Reichsarbeitsdienst*). Even Anni's need to pawn her lingerie and her desperate pleas for meat seem to indicate her unrealistic material desires and not necessarily abject poverty brought on by war, especially since she has enough money to send herself flowers. *Der verzauberte Tag* depicts a different but equally valid reality: the problem of daydreaming and living with unfulfilled desires. During the Second World War, a period of scarcity and separation, people continued to have sexual and economic needs but few outlets beyond daydreaming. As Karsten Witte has aptly stated: "*Der verzauberte Tag* expresses the bombed-out moviegoer's desire for warmth and security after the military losses at Stalingrad and in Africa and offers them a dreamlike preview of a future without prospects, the loss of the present, and the sweep through the past."⁸⁴

In its proposed advertising campaign, the Ufa studio emphasized that *Der verzauberte Tag* presented ordinary people with ordinary problems but in a way that made the familiar seem extraordinary. Günther Dietrich praised *Der verzauberte Tag* because it portrayed "people of our time, with our joys and troubles. And yet this film shows things that we do not see in everyday life. Here the mask falls from the faces as it were. The most subtle psychological stirrings are made visible and force us to participate in this destiny so gripping exactly because it is so commonplace."⁸⁵ Critic Hermann Hacker, writing for the same Ufa press package, asserted that Pewas's film could help contemporary viewers to come to terms with a pressing, if elusive, social problem:

It is fine and useful that this film examines a problem whose occurrence cannot be denied simply because it does not appear visible in the everyday world. And it is equally fine that the young director Peter Pewas, who is presenting with *Der verzauberte Tag* his first major work, develops the problem of dangerous daydreaming to the last consequence and generates the solution in a natural way through the power of real life.⁸⁶

The question of how mass audiences might have reacted to this film in 1944 cannot be answered with any certainty, but the varied reactions from the select viewers in the propaganda ministry's air-raid shelter suggest that the film was too ambiguous for propaganda purposes. Reich Film Intendant Hans Hinkel summarized the film's mixed reception in a letter to Goebbels:

The air-raid shelter association's opinion of the film was predominantly negative. Above all the male viewers sharply rejected the film, because they thought Christine's fiancé (Ernst Wladow) was depicted as too foolish and also Hans Stüwe as Prof. Götz was unconvincing. A number of female viewers accepted the film uncritically, while others rightly posed the question what this film actually wanted to express. They also were not certain about the plot development. Only a few coworkers in leading positions in various departments recognized the dangerous tendency behind this film. It arises from the prostitution milieu, the unpleasant depiction of the bourgeois official, the coquettish behavior of Anni (Eva-Maria Meinecke), and in general the very obvious direction.⁸⁷

Hinkel never explained what he meant by the term "very obvious direction," but he seemed to be indicating that the problem lay in the film's tone rather than in its content. In an interview conducted in 1978, Peter Pewas maintained that *Der verzauberte Tag* was censored primarily because of his directorial style:

It was only the style, because the material was absolutely approved, supported from above. I always had the feeling that in those days when all the fronts were shaky people did not want a collapse on the cultural front. They did not want any formal experiments, any acoustical experiments. They wanted something tangible, people spoke of cultural bolshevism.⁸⁸

Ironically, the sophisticated visual style Goebbels wanted and the trade press routinely promoted transformed an acceptable story with potential propaganda value into a multivalent and presumably subversive film that the National Socialists could not allow audiences to see.

Coming to Grips with the Past: *Via Mala* (1944–1945)

Via Mala is a *Heimatfilm* gone terribly wrong, a hellish vision of family life, physical and mental abuse, murder, and collective guilt. Directed by Josef von Baky and based on John Knittel's internationally acclaimed novel about a brutal drunkard who is killed under mysterious circumstances, the film underwent an amazing number of changes and delays over a four-year period. Thea von Harbou's screenplay was submitted to the censor on May 21, 1941, but only approved nine months later on February 28, 1942. Despite the high start-up costs including the purchase of copyrights from Switzerland, Goebbels stopped the project because the material was "too gloomy."⁸⁹ Over a year later, *Via Mala* was revived, and filming began on July 12, 1943 at the Ufa studios in Babelsberg and later on location in the Tyrolean village of Mayrhofen. After several further delays, Baky submitted a completed film to the Ufa board of directors on March 30, 1944, but on April 15 the propa-

ganda ministry ordered Baky to reshoot the ending. The new version was submitted to the censor on January 15, 1945. Reich Film Intendant Hans Hinkel finally approved the film on March 9, 1945, but rescinded the order ten days later. On March 19, 1945, Hinkel issued the following statement: "The film department has already been informed that the film *Via Mala*, which in itself has been judged to be good, has to be rejected at this time due to its gloomy character. The film is only approved for foreign release."⁹⁰ According to writer Erich Kästner, *Via Mala* premiered in Mayrhofen on April 7, 1945, one month before Germany's unconditional surrender.⁹¹

Via Mala is set in an isolated sawmill on a rocky mountaintop next to a roaring waterfall, where the miller Jonas Lauretz (Karl Wery) terrorizes his extended family. On a stormy winter night, Lauretz sends his grown son Nikolaus (Malte Jäger) to town for alcohol but when he returns home empty-handed, the old man savagely whips him. The pious wife and her embittered daughter Hanna are powerless against this brute. Equally helpless are Lauretz's mistress Kuni, who lives with the family, and his lackey Jöry, whom the old man has crippled with his beatings. The angelic daughter Silvelie (Karin Hardt) tries to intercede on Nikolaus's behalf, but when Lauretz learns that she has convinced the innkeeper Bündner to refuse him liquor, he beats her too. That night Lauretz disappears and is never seen again. The town judge believes that he was murdered and begins to interrogate the family, but dies during the hearing. The family starts to prosper and heal its wounds, but the old man's evil spirit seems to haunt the sawmill. Everyone suspects the other of murder because they all had good reasons for wanting Lauretz dead. The new town judge Andreas von Richenau (Viktor Staal) falls in love with Silvelie, and when she tries to tell him about her father, he refuses to listen. Despite her repeated attempts to remember the past, Andi insists they forget it all and marry. After they are wed, Andi assumes his post as town judge and finally reads the Lauretz file. Certain that the old man was murdered, Andi feels obligated to serve justice and reopen the case. During the hearing at the sawmill, the innkeeper Bündner confesses that he killed Lauretz out of love for Silvelie. The entire family forgives him because Bündner only did what each of them wanted to do all along.

This fantasy of collective patricide features a brutal father figure resembling the monsters found in German expressionist horror films. Baky not only uses the horror film conventions of chiaroscuro lighting and irregular camera shots, he also creates suspense by drawing out the old man's entrance and by focusing on the other characters' fear of him as they await his arrival. Lauretz seems like an unstoppable force rather than a human being. He is frequently presented as a shadow, an isolated body part, or supplanted by the whip so closely associated with him. Filmed from behind at an extreme low angle that makes him appear immense and aggressive, Lauretz's unnaturally large and stiff body fills the screen and dominates the space. He moves with

the awkward gait of the Golem or Frankenstein through a nearly barren room comparable to a prison cell with its low ceilings, thick walls, tiny windows, and sturdy doors. Lauretz's first appearance on screen is exemplary. In a prolonged, extreme close-up we see the doorknob slowly turn and a gigantic hand appear in the door jamb. The camera cuts to an enormous man shot from behind at a low angle as he walks to a small door on the other side of the room. He is so large that he has to bend down to avoid hitting the ceiling beams. He opens the heavy door to a howling storm, whistles into the dark, and closes the door. The camera cuts to two women paralyzed with fright and staring at the giant in silence. He turns around, and the audience gets its first look at his face as he takes a whip from the coat rack and leaves the house. The entire scene is shot without any dialogue. The incessant noise of the sawmill, the roaring waterfall, the raging storm, the piercing whistle, and the dull but steady shuffling of Lauretz's boots are contrasted to the women's silent terror. Lauretz is like a destructive force of nature from which no one can escape. When the women are finally alone, they agree, "That isn't a father, that's a beast."⁹²



The monstrous patriarch Lauretz: *Via Mala*.

Lauretz faces little opposition. His wife and daughters are defenseless and cannot leave the miserable sawmill or his sphere of influence. Even his mistress Kuni cannot escape his cruel grasp: "Do you think I like being here? Do you think I wouldn't rather leave today than tomorrow? This God damned miller! [. . .] I ran away once. He brought me back. He'd find me anywhere. He'll never let go of me. Devil. Devil."⁹³ The men are also powerless to stop the relentless attacks. The lackey Jöry confronts the old man and tries to restrain him but is thrown to the floor like a rag doll. Lauretz's son Nikolaus is a weakling who cannot stand up to his cold-blooded father and bears the brunt of his wrath. When Nikolaus falls on the rocks and breaks the bottle of schnapps, he wants to run away but allows his mother and sister to carry him inside. Surrounded in a tableau of women tending his wounds, he is already broken in body and soul, but his father sadistically tortures him further. Lauretz chases him into his room and whips him behind locked doors as the women beg, pray, and grow numb with despair. For Nikolaus there is no escape from his tiny, claustrophobic room with its slanted roof and no escape from the cycle of fear and torment. Lying face down on his bed crying pitifully, his back a series of bleeding open wounds, Nikolaus refuses to forgive his father: "May the Lord forget me, if I forget this."⁹⁴

The innkeeper Bündner offers a ray of hope as a rational and compassionate man who might be able to stop the abuse. The villagers respect Bündner as a business leader who has brought prosperity and a sense of well being to the entire community. They value him more than the mayor or the judge, because as one man explains: "You can't be voted into office or fired. You are simply here. And it is fortunate for the entire village that you are here. For everyone who has something on his heart."⁹⁵ Unbeknownst to the villagers, Bündner has made a deal with Lauretz. The innkeeper is secretly in love with Silvelie and has agreed to give the old man liquor whenever he wants in exchange for having Silvelie live and work in his inn. Silvelie begs Bündner to help her, "He is no longer human. He is going to kill us yet. You don't know what kind of a life they lead down there in the sawmill."⁹⁶ Now faced with Lauretz's ultimatum, "No schnapps, no Silvelie," Bündner refuses to give him any liquor, but he passively stands by as the old man beats his daughter. Instead of interfering, he goes to his office, pets his dog, drinks two shots of schnapps, and stares off into space. Bündner is unwilling or unable to confront the tyrant head on, and the entire community of men gathered at the inn allows Lauretz to commit a violent crime without any consequences. No moral or legal authority openly challenges this savage man, but Lauretz is never seen again after this night.

With the miller's mysterious disappearance, the sawmill is transformed and its occupants begin to flourish. It is spring, the trees are in bloom, and a cheerful melody fills the air. The house has taken on a feminine, harmoni-

ous ambience: light now streams in from the windows and open door, and flowers and plants decorate the formerly barren room. Most significantly, the old man's whip, rifle, and walking stick have been replaced by a woman's straw hat, apron, and spinning wheel. Nikolaus is now strong enough to chop wood, Hanna has found a useful occupation as a nurse, and Kuni has regained her self-respect. While to all appearances everyone is better off, they live in constant fear and suspect each other of murder. The trembling mother admits that her husband haunts her dreams, "He is always there as soon as it gets dark. He sits in the corner at the kitchen stove. He crouches by the woodpile. He walks behind me to the mill. He lurks at my bed. I am always so afraid."⁹⁷ Although Lauretzt has been gone for six months, his evil presence is still deeply felt. The family leaves his chair empty and sets a place for him at the table. They even cut a piece of bread for him at lunch because his absence makes them feel just as uneasy and frightened as his presence ever did. They have been so psychologically wounded that Lauretzt continues to color their existence. The family cannot stop performing these deeply ingrained subservient acts even after they have become senseless rituals.

In contrast to the earlier scenes of threatening cliffs and violent storms associated with Lauretzt, peaceful snow-covered mountaintops in the distance and a lovely little town in the valley set the stage for Andreas von Richenau's arrival. Dressed in a modern suit, Andi arrives by a horse-drawn coach but decides to walk in the sunshine just as the church bells ring and Silvelie walks down the road. Their paths literally cross at the graveyard, and they start walking together, stealing glances and then demurely looking away. They hear folk music playing in the distance and agree to dance without exchanging a word. With the mountain in the background and surrounded by blossoming trees, Silvelie and Andi dance together in a scene of fluid movement, growing intimacy, freedom, and happiness. With her father's departure and Andi's arrival, Silvelie is introduced to another world, one in bloom, filled with carefree movement, collective joy, and love.

When Silvelie learns that this stranger is the new judge, she runs away and questions whether she is to blame for her father's death: "Maybe I am bad. Maybe my father's death is my . . . Who knows."⁹⁸ The judge's presence leads the entire family to wonder who is responsible for Lauretzt's death. The mother suspects her son, Hanna thinks Kuni did it, Nikolaus believes Jöry saw something, but they all agree it could never have been Silvelie. This divinely pure woman, who brings out the best in everyone and is revered above all else, suffers from the buried secrets and tries to master the past. When Andi asks her to marry him, she laments that she cannot be his wife because she thinks about her father "day and night." Andi tries to convince her that she must forget everything that happened in the past: "I know. I spoke with Mr. Bündner. About you, your father, your family, your entire unfortunate past. That is all behind you, Silvelie. Even if your father had an

accident or something. [. . .] You have nothing to do with him anymore. He lies down there. Forget it, forget everything. Think only of me." Silvelie is the voice of conscience and pronounces the simple moral imperative: "I cannot forget, I may not."⁹⁹ Although she repeatedly tries to bring up her father's death, Andi refuses to hear about it, because he does not want to know about anything so painful. Since Andi, a community leader who embodies moral and legal authority, refuses to delve into the past and assign guilt, Silvelie agrees to forget. She tells her family: "I want the past to finally be past. Make a clean break and try to start over."¹⁰⁰ At Silvelie's urging Andi takes her father's place at the table and assumes the role of family patriarch. He helps Nikolaus realize his dream of studying at a technical school, and he implicitly promises to take care of the family. Silvelie confides to her sister that Andi is the benevolent presence they all so desperately need: "He has ordered everything and made amends."¹⁰¹

It is only when Andi assumes his official post as town judge that he changes his mind and insists that the past is very much present. After he reads the Lauretztz file, he is convinced that Silvelie's father did not die a natural death. When he confronts her, she refuses to talk about the matter: "My father is dead, for me, for everyone."¹⁰² Earlier she had been willing to tell him the truth, but now she warns against digging too deeply into the circumstances surrounding her father's death: "Leave the past alone or it will bring misfortune to you and me!"¹⁰³ Now that Andi is a public official and not simply a husband, he feels obligated to seek justice "whatever the price," because "law must remain law."¹⁰⁴ He tells his wife that duty comes first because "We cannot live in an unclean world."¹⁰⁵ Silvelie is not convinced that law and justice are the same thing, and she fears that if Andi continues with an investigation, "Law will triumph and the people will be destroyed."¹⁰⁶

The web of guilt and intrigue becomes more and more tangled as each member of the family confesses to the murder in order to save the others from harm. They all earnestly admit that they harbored ill will against Lauretztz and considered killing him. From the onset, they realized that Lauretztz's murder was not the act of an individual. Regardless of who actually killed the beast, they all wanted him dead. Even in their first interrogation with the old judge, they stressed how they belonged together and deserved the same fate. No one could be singled out because they all suffered the tyrant's wrath and therefore had to stick together until the bitter end. Hanna argues that the murder was a form of collective wish fulfillment and therefore no one can assign blame to any individual: "Mentally every one of us killed him. Mentally every one of us is guilty. If any one of us killed him, then he did our deed and is no more guilty than we are."¹⁰⁷

In a surprise announcement, Bündner confesses that he killed Lauretztz on that fateful night by pushing him off the bridge into the abyss. Unlike the family members, who were victims of abuse and wanted to kill their oppres-

sor out of hatred, Bündner acted out of love for Silvelie. At first he wanted to believe that he was doing a selfless and valiant deed by rescuing her from a living hell, but he soon realized that the murder was motivated by his own egocentric need to keep Silvelie nearby. It is this injustice that gnaws at his conscience, the recognition that he acted out of selfishness, rather than the remorse over murder. Bündner is compelled to acknowledge his actions because: "Injustice tears into a person like the saw into the log."¹⁰⁸

Because they all had imagined killing Lauretz, they believe they are all equally guilty of the crime. As if the real-life murder was merely the logical consequence of their collective imagination, the family accepts Bündner's act as necessary. Most striking in this higher justice is that they exonerate him of any wrongdoing and seem to accept that he will not be punished. Hanna states for the record, "If he is guilty, then we all are."¹⁰⁹ Frau Lauretz admits her own culpability and says, "God forgive him and us."¹¹⁰ Even the judge agrees with his wife when she grants the murderer an acquittal (*Freispruch*), so that Bündner's final words seem rhetorical: "Then I can stand before any judge with a peaceful heart."¹¹¹

Via Mala anticipates the central moral crisis of postwar Germany: collective guilt and coming to grips with the past (*Vergangenheitsbewältigung*). In *Via Mala* Baky has created a problem film that encapsulates the defining myth of German national identity as told in the ruins of the fallen Reich. The father figure in this parable of tyranny bears a remarkable resemblance to the image of Adolf Hitler that would emerge on the pages of history books years later. Like Jonas Lauretz, a monster who brutalizes the innocent in his mad drive for intoxication, Hitler would be characterized as a psychopathic god spreading the pathology of evil, a behemoth intent on destroying everything in its path on the quest for ecstatic power.¹¹² However, the fantasy of patricide and the overthrow of tyranny remained just that, a fantasy never actualized in the film or in reality.

While today's viewer with the benefit of hindsight may accept more easily the parallels between Baky's film and Germany's painful coming to grips with its dictatorial past, it is highly unlikely that the contemporary viewer in 1945 would have been oblivious to the self-referential aspects of *Via Mala*. The pervasive violence directed against those defined not only as weak and innocent but also as family members allowed the viewer to identify with the victims as "one of us." Nazi Germany valorized Adolf Hitler as more than just a statesman and national leader; the Führer was seen as an authoritarian father figure destined to protect the national family (*Volksgemeinschaft*). The cinema in particular fostered the image of Hitler and previous heads of state as the national patriarch in such films as *Triumph des Willens* (1935), *Ohm Krüger* (1941), and *Der große König* (1942). Moviegoers so familiar with symbolic father figures and the increasing horrors of Nazi dictatorship would not need to stretch their imaginations all too far to make a comparison between Lauretz

and Hitler. The allegorical nature of *Via Mala*, the troubled family as a synecdoche for the German nation, is most clearly seen in the figure of Silvelie. With her crown of blond braids and pure heart, Silvelie is like Germania, the female personification of Germany rendered in antiquity as the sorrowful prisoner, in the middle ages as the venerated queen, and in the nineteenth century as the triumphant warrior. The family and community members feel obligated to protect this innocent young woman at all costs because she represents all that is good in each of them. She tames the beast, comforts the sorrowful, and restores honor to the downtrodden. Lauretzt's fate is sealed when he beats Silvelie; the assault on Germania can never be pardoned.

The identity of the murderer, his motivation, and his punishment are essential to *Via Mala*, not only as mystery conventions but also as guideposts for the viewer to debate moral issues and consider the validity of behavioral models. The propaganda ministry recognized the importance of these questions because it ordered Baky to reshoot the film's ending. Baky's first version had already deviated from John Knittel's original 1934 novel in which the entire family except Silvelie conspired together to kill Lauretzt. In Baky's first version, Bündner confessed to the murder and then threw himself from the same bridge where he had killed Lauretzt, in effect taking on the roles of both judge and executioner.¹¹³ The evildoer who commits suicide in a chivalrous act of self-sacrifice to grant his loved ones a free conscience and closure was not without precedence in Nazi cinema.¹¹⁴ So why did the propaganda ministry insist on a new ending? By having Bündner tried not in a court of law but by the family, the film conforms to National Socialist concepts of a higher justice. According to this unwritten law, the individual must behave according to his beliefs and popular customs while the community decides whether he acted in good faith or not. Bündner confesses that he was motivated by self-interest, putting his own desires first and not considering the good of the whole. It is this crime, his failure to conform to the ideal of the *Volksgemeinschaft*, that the people's court exonerates. Hanna, Nikolaus, and their mother all agree that Bündner's murderous deed fulfilled the community's will and that he therefore deserves to be set free. Bündner's acquittal suggests that the end justifies the means. Murder is a legitimate action if the perpetrator believed in what he was doing and the community benefited from the elimination of an evil monster. This master narrative, in which the enemy was vilified as a non-human destructive force justifiably killed in order to serve the greater good, had a long and rich tradition in German cinema. In films ranging from *Der Golem, wie er in die Welt kam* (1920) and *Nosferatu: Eine Symphonie des Grauens* (1921) to *Jud Süß* (1940) and *Heimkehr* (1941), a parade of monsters who terrorized the homeland were defeated by innocence and self-sacrifice. This potent national narrative, used so effectively in 1940 to justify the murder of the Jewish racial enemy and in 1941 to warrant military aggression against the sub-human Eastern barbarian, was

recycled in 1944–45 to call for the murder of an enemy within, the evil father intent on destroying all that the family holds dear.

Film critic Werner Sudendorf recently wrote that “with its intention to sweep under the table the question of collective guilt and an unmastered past, [*Via Mala*] is a permanent retraction of previously biased fundamental positions. [. . .] As such the film gets caught up in a web of contentions and principles.”¹¹⁵ Indeed, *Via Mala* seems to be caught between two time periods, and while it begins the discussion of a collective past, it is marked by the propaganda ministry’s imprint. On the one hand, Baky’s film exposes the physical and psychological scars that tyranny has left on its victims. Norbert Grob has suggested that *Via Mala* is “a film of aesthetic resistance,” because it “presents an image of the rawest violence, an image of terror, and of the wounds and pain that this terror has caused in the people surrounding it.”¹¹⁶ On the other hand, the victims never actually enact their fantasy of tyrannicide, leaving the deed to an outsider. Most significantly, Baky’s film provides a limited forum for a debate on the past because the happy ending demands closure without delving too deeply into the question of personal and collective responsibility.

Via Mala demonstrates what Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich have described as Germany’s “inability to mourn.” In their psychological study, first published in 1967, the Mitscherlichs analyzed how postwar German society refused to accept collective responsibility for its immediate past and the genocide and world war perpetrated in the name of National Socialism. Germany, they argued, “did not succumb to melancholia; instead, as a group, those who had lost their ‘ideal leader,’ the representative of a commonly shared ego-ideal, managed to avoid self-devaluation by breaking all effective bridges to the immediate past.” Germans as a group refused to mourn the loss of their national patriarch and assigned all guilt to this one omnipotent individual because “any minority, when everything that is evil and dangerous has been projected onto it, can be persecuted with impunity.” Until the nation overcame “the instinctive and unconscious self-protective forces of forgetting, denying, projecting, and other similar defense mechanisms,” it could never come to grips with its own past.¹¹⁷ *Via Mala* mirrors this process of denying the past and collective guilt. Lauretz’s murder is justified because he is a demonic monster: “Everything evil stems from him.”¹¹⁸ The moral imperative, “I cannot forget, I may not,” is quickly replaced with the urgent warning to: “Leave the past alone or it will bring misfortune to you and me!” Whereas the Lauretz family admits psychological culpability (“Mentally every one of us killed him”), their deed nonetheless remains in the realm of thought, and therefore the guilt in their hearts must in the end be construed as innocence. The admission of collective guilt is immediately retracted when they grant Bündner (and themselves) an acquit-

tal, because as Fritz Göttler has noted, "The coming generation will refuse to sit in judgment because otherwise it must condemn itself."¹¹⁹

Via Mala teaches the viewer that the horrible past, years of brutalization and hatred, can now be forgotten, because an outsider confessed to wrongdoing. Murder is stylized as an act of love rather than hate, regrettable but plainly the only recourse in a society ruled by a higher sense of justice but beset with ineffective moral and legal leadership. All evil stems from one mad and violent patriarch. The murderers are all victims and collective guilt is swept away to the dustbin of history. Everyone forgives everyone else their sins because they are all sinners at heart. The murderous past simply disappears.

A Happy Ending?

"What do you want to see in film: problems or entertainment without problems, destinies from real everyday life or from an improbable world in which all wishes are fulfilled, idle loafers in a rich milieu or working people in a working world?"¹²⁰ When faced with such a rigid either/or, reality or dream world, the vast majority of moviegoers, critics, filmmakers, and actors in 1939 voted for reality. The public wanted to see movies about contemporary life, engaging stories that shed light on the times, and also showed sympathetic characters dealing with problems they knew about from their own lives. Motion pictures need to engage the viewer and offer identification opportunities, because, according to director Carl Froelich: "The fate unfolding up there on the screen before us should and must be so strong that it simply forces us to feel that we are one with the performers, to make their experience our own."¹²¹

Moviegoers and critics generally agreed that great films were not made on the either/or principle; they needed equal parts of reality and fantasy. A faithful rendering of everyday circumstances without some measure of imagination could be journalism but never art. Popular actor Heinz Rühmann suggested an approach that offered a middle ground: "Reality as dream world! Film should show real life but in a more relaxed form."¹²² One viewer summarized the prevailing outlook: "Film should not be a pale imitation of reality but rather should idealize everyday life, demonstrate the meaning of daily work, show our neighbors and ourselves in those moments in which we possess universal validity and become types. Accentuate stronger than reality does! Show our world very small and very great, heroism and brutality! But always our world: how it is and how it could be."¹²³

While there was a general consensus that cinema should focus on reality, there was no consensus on what "reality" meant. Most writers wanted movies about the present, but they also demanded a highly optimistic approach to a difficult, if not grim, existence. For example, one viewer argued that the fol-

lowing story line reflected everyday reality in 1939 Germany: "An honest worker who earns his modest bread with daily hard labor is always satisfied and retires at seventy-five with an old-age pension of 60 RM. He is nevertheless thankful to God or fate and certainly does not need to be naïve but rather a philosopher of life, who is above wealth and the good life and is happy with what remains: forest, field, military, art, maybe even his laughter."¹²⁴

The scenario of the happy worker struggling all his life to survive but content with his meager lot is a prescription for national socialist realism that would surely have gained favor from both Hitler and Goebbels. The Führer and the Propaganda Minister repeatedly called for films about the present, but they were by no means issuing an open invitation to filmmakers to criticize party ideology or social institutions. They wanted a selective form of realism that would include positive heroes, an optimistic portrayal of the working world, an innovative but easily understood style (*Volkstümlichkeit*), and films infused with the universal values inherent in Nazi politics (*Parteilichkeit*).¹²⁵ This formula for realism dominated the critical debate and also explains why the problem films under discussion failed to reach a mass audience in the Third Reich.

Das Leben kann so schön sein, *Der verzauberte Tag*, and *Via Mala* do not present positive role models and a rosy, optimistic world in which everyone is satisfied with their fate. Despite their different approaches and styles, all three films showcase ordinary people who dream of a better life but are left with so many unfulfilled wishes that succumb to defeatism. These films resolve conflicts with a happy ending, but the characters' sudden outbursts and small gestures convey more honesty than any contrived narrative closure. The forlorn voices of Nora, Anni, Christine, and Silvelie resonate long after the movies are over and encapsulate a pervasive desperation with everyday life. Nora's "Sometimes I get so fed up," Anni's, "We're not going to live very long anyway," Christine's "There has to be something else," and Silvelie's "Dear God, how are we supposed to endure this? I can't stand it any longer," defy the forced optimism and disingenuousness imposed on problem films to mitigate their social criticism.¹²⁶ It is difficult, if not impossible, to forget the image of Silvelie hugging the chimney in a world without human warmth or Nora gently rocking her sewing box hoping her husband will one day want their baby. These small gestures speak volumes about the acute need for love and simple acts of kindness.

The characters' emotional, economic, and existential conflicts are not resolved by any structural changes in society but by the sudden conversion of a single man who comes to his senses in the nick of time. In the last minute, Hannes recognizes his own foolishness and vows to start anew, Götz sees Christine as if for the first time and falls madly in love with her, and Bündner confesses to a crime everyone wanted to commit and is miraculously exonerated of any guilt. The resolution of conflicts via the "happy ending" contra-

dicted the basic project of the problem film: to expose those areas of a failed social contract that required a far-reaching collective solution. The very concept of a happy ending was widely debated in the trade press and closely linked to the consumer-driven Hollywood film industry. Writing for *Licht-Bild-Bühne* in March 1939, Hans Joachim Neitzke summarized the dominant critical stance:

The term originally comes from America where it developed in film production from a catch phrase for the cheap concession to public taste to a business principle. For the German public it became a measure of worth that contained a specific meaning: "happy end" at all costs, even if it demonstrates the absurdity in the inner logic of the film events: the optimism of "keep smiling," even if the theme is serious and tragic. [. . .] The German has never cherished a preference for such optimism, which transfigures everything in a rosy light, and today he is less likely to cherish it than ever before. Not because he is inherently a pessimist, but rather because he is actually an optimist. But an optimist based on a heart that remains intact, an unbroken vitality. He looks at things straight in the eye, not to make conciliatory compliments but to discuss them seriously. *He acknowledges the ethical battle conditions of life.*¹²⁷

The critics wanted well-crafted stories and argued that a harmonious resolution had to evolve out of the circumstances rather than be tacked onto the end of the film. However, they seemed to agree with the propaganda ministry's censors that motion pictures should provide positive role models, so that viewers could develop further their innate steely optimism and triumph over the "ethical battle conditions of life." *Das Leben kann so schön sein*, *Der verzauberte Tag*, and *Via Mala* failed on both accounts. The happy endings attached to these films are so incongruous with the main plot that they actually call attention to unresolved problems. Moreover, these films display a deeply rooted pessimism and portray men and women who are all too human, weak, desperate, obsessed, and violent.

The female characters are ordinary young women who work in ordinary jobs: a seamstress, a salesgirl, and a hotel maid. But they display a restlessness and determination seldom seen in German motion pictures of the 1930s and 1940s. Above all their relentless quest for autonomy, economic independence, sexual pleasure, and spiritual comfort define them and capture the spirit of their times. Nora, Christine, Anni, and even Silvelie express desires that are most often left unspoken in the cinema because they contradict the notion of a nation gladly sacrificing individual fulfillment for the good of the whole. The young women in these problem films find it increasingly difficult to suppress their basic needs; they crave a space of their own and the right to roam unfettered. They struggle against the monotony, conformity, and violence of everyday life in Nazi Germany, a struggle that does not easily

comply with the state's ideological agenda or the popular image of social harmony found in so many motion pictures.

The male characters also deviate from the standard gender role models found in feature films of the Third Reich. Rarely did viewers encounter young men like Hannes and Nikolaus who had lost all faith in the future and were paralyzed by the fear of arbitrary violence. These young men do not readily accept social responsibilities nor do they defend themselves, and yet they do not receive the typical punishment awaiting men found to be inadequate. Death is the fate for most weak male characters in Nazi cinema, but Hannes and Nikolaus continue to survive by depending on robust young women and capable older men for strength and guidance.¹²⁸ The middle-aged male characters fall equally short when measured against the unrealistic standards of masculinity prevalent in Nazi Germany. Like the young men, Bündner is a remarkably passive character. Although he secretly kills Lauretz, he is no man of action; he allows the woman he loves to be savagely beaten and never gathers enough courage to propose marriage until it is too late. Although men like the postal official Meier and the accountant Krummholz have established professional careers, they are so obsessed with order that they have no close personal relationships. These petty bureaucrats invest so much of their egos into a rigid world outlook that they lose all sense of who they are when reality intrudes upon their schedules and carefully laid plans. Meier remains a laughable stereotype, but Krummholz loses control completely and becomes a violent criminal. The drunkard Jonas Lauretz, by contrast, is no petty tyrant; he is a true tyrant who forces his own savage order on the weak and helpless. This violent man without any apparent redeeming qualities dies a violent death and will never be mourned. The positive male hero is conspicuously missing from the problem film. The one male character who comes closest to the ideal of honor and resolve is the judge Andreas von Richenau, but his status as an outsider who "has ordered everything and made amends" seems to indicate that in 1945 society needed an external solution to its internal problems.

All three films thematize memory and illustrate how the past continues to inform the present. In both *Das Leben kann so schön sein* and *Der verzauberte Tag* the process of remembering is depicted in omniscient flashbacks that allow the male characters to re-evaluate their lives. Hannes relives his first year of marriage and the very act of narration grants him the necessary distance to work through his fears. Memory is rendered in a way that empowers Hannes to see across time. Each memory sequence begins with an extreme close-up of Hannes's eyes as he conjures up a past that is then superimposed on his present. By visualizing the past and his role in it at the same time as he watches himself, Hannes can see where he went wrong and can imagine a different future. Götz also remembers the recent past in a single flashback, and through the process of recollection, embedding himself

like a character in a movie while retaining his position as observer, he is finally able to see the world clearly and can picture a future with Christine. In *Via Mala*, by contrast, memory is repeatedly blocked. In Baky's film the past is over and done, it is never revisited through flashbacks, visual replay, or acoustic reminders. No one except Silvelie wants to recall what has happened; they all want to bury the past and start over with a clean slate. Silvelie's attempts to broach the topic are met with such resistance that she eventually gives up. When the past is momentarily made present it does not help the Lauretzt family members to come to grips with their own actions. Only Andi, an outsider for whom the events hold no personal significance, witnesses Bündner's confession and walk through the crime scene. The other characters do not take part in this recollection process and do not see it as a means to re-evaluate their own past and change their present. The most striking difference between these three films is that *Das Leben kann so schön sein* and *Der verzauberte Tag* deal with a personal history and characters who want to learn from their past mistakes to change the way they think in the present, while *Via Mala* deals with a collective history and characters who seek redemption without remorse. Although *Via Mala* had the potential to initiate a healthy debate about the immediate past, it fails because it remained a product of its time, a project torn by too many conflicting agendas. Its linear narrative style stalls the active process of memory, which calls for critical distance, analysis, and reflection so that the past remains past.

The problem films discussed here reveal compelling social fantasies that were deemed too unruly to explore in their current form. In essence, they delivered the honest assessment of contemporary society that the genre promised. In 1938 the fear of the future and the overwhelming sense of impending disaster were overshadowed by an equally powerful belief that with sufficient economic resources the individual could protect himself and his family from the outside world. *Das Leben kann so schön sein* shows just how compelling National Socialism's promises were to the ordinary man. The dream of a good job, consumer goods, and a home on the outskirts of Berlin, a private sphere still located in the real world, was the price for conformity. In exchange for the ability to retreat inward, the ordinary citizen implicitly promised to retreat from political engagement. By 1944 the tangible effects of world war had left their mark on the cinematic imagination, but the pervasive sense of loss was still countered by a stubborn insistence on preserving hope for a better future. *Der verzauberte Tag* expresses the longing for a world beyond the here and now, a place where one can enjoy financial independence, freedom, and romance. This utopian fantasy is nearly devoid of any specific references to contemporary life in the bombed-out cities of war-torn Germany. The reality of 1944, days consumed with monotonous labor and nights spent worrying about loved ones, was so incongruous with this fantasy of hope that it appeared as a mere trace. The present

seemed to hold so little promise that it could not be accommodated by anything less than an urban fairy tale, where destiny reigns and wishes come true. By 1945 the social fantasy has left the modern metropolis for the safety of the mountains, leaving behind the complex problems of everyday life in the cities to concentrate on the microcosm of mythic village life. *Via Mala* begins as a nightmare unfolding in a hellish world where a cruel father attacks his own children. By killing the oppressor, the survivors free themselves from the curse of the past and can live happily ever after in their own beautiful, isolated world. All of these films voice the ardent wish to retreat into a private sphere, and as contemporary problems impinged more and more on the lives of individuals, the social fantasies became less and less anchored in a specific reality. As German cities were bombed and its armies were retreating on all fronts, the cinema of the Third Reich encouraged viewers to conjure up their own private world. Heinz Rühmann's concluding remarks in *Die Feuerzangenbowle* (The Punch Bowl, 1944) encapsulate the successful formula for popular cinema and for survival as the National Socialist world crumbled: "Truth is only in the memories we carry with us, the dreams we spin, and the desires that drive us. Let us be content with that."¹²⁹

Notes

¹ "Theater, Film, Literatur, Presse, Rundfunk, sie haben alle der Erhaltung der im Wesen unseres Volkstums lebenden Ewigkeitswerte zu dienen." Adolf Hitler, March 23, 1933, Motto, *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 11 (May 1939): 305.

² "Der Film darf also nicht vor der Härte des Tages entweichen und sich in einem Traumland verlieren, das nur in den Gehirnen wirklichkeitsfremder Regisseure und Manuskriptschreiber, sonst aber nirgendwo in der Welt liegt." Joseph Goebbels, Motto, *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 11 (May 1939): 305.

³ Thomas Elsaesser and Michael Wedel, eds., *The BFI Companion to German Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 1999), 120.

⁴ Propaganda Minister Goebbels instituted a system of pre-censorship requiring the approval of treatments and scripts before shooting and careful oversight during the shooting and editing to avoid censorship after the completion of a film. These efforts, combined with post-censorship of the final product, a vigilant advertising campaign, and an orchestrated critical response insured that only about two dozen completed films were banned between 1933 and 1945. For an overview of censorship, see Felix Moeller, *Der Filmminister: Goebbels und der Film im Dritten Reich* (Berlin: Henschel, 1998); and Kraft Wetzel and Peter Hagemann, *Zensur: Verbotene deutsche Filme 1933–1945* (Berlin: Volker Spiess, 1978).

⁵ "Sie zerstören Illusionen und Identifikationen und stellen Normen und Werte in Frage, statt sie zu bekräftigen, beispielsweise die Geschlechterrollen. Sie plazieren die Zuschauenden via Identifikationsangebote nicht durchgängig in der Gesellschaft, wie das die meisten Filme der NS-Zeit taten, um potentielle Veränderungswünsche

zu neutralisieren." Thomas Schärer, *Filmische Nonkonformität im NS-Staat: Eine Filmreihe 7.–15. April 1997* (Berlin: Freunde der deutschen Kinemathek, 1997), 1.

⁶ Rolf Hansen (1904–1991) started his career as an actor in Munich and at the National Theater in Weimar before working as a film editor and directorial assistant for Carl Froelich at the Ufa studios. Hansen had already directed one full-length feature film, the comedy *Gabriele, eins, zwei, drei* (1937) starring Marianne Hoppe and Gustav Fröhlich. He would later gain fame as the director of Zarah Leander's blockbuster melodramas *Der Weg ins Freie* (1941), *Die große Liebe* (1942), and *Damals* (1943).

⁷ The original German film titles were *Ultimo*, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*, *Glück auf Raten*, and finally *Das Leben kann so schön sein*. Jochen Huth wrote the screenplay based on his own play *Ultimo*.

⁸ *Das Leben kann so schön sein*, Censor-Card 50115, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. These censor cards provide a description of each scene but not the dialogues. In a chart listing the premieres outside the capital of Berlin, *Licht-Bild-Bühne* notes that *Das Leben kann so schön sein* premiered in Vienna at the Opernkino on December 23, 1938, but it leaves a conspicuously empty space for the date of the Berlin premiere. See "Vorlauf in der Provinz: Erstes Halbjahr der Spielzeit 1938/39," *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 24 (January 28, 1939).

⁹ Wetzels, *Zensur*, 90.

¹⁰ "Weil er die Bevölkerungspolitik der Regierung zu sabotieren geeignet ist," qtd. in Wetzels, *Zensur*, 90.

¹¹ "Der Ufa-Film *Das Leben kann so schön sein* ist verboten worden. Er widerspricht bevölkerungspolitischen Grundsätzen des Nationalsozialismus und steht ihnen z.T. direkt entgegen," qtd. in Wetzels, *Zensur*, 91.

¹² Since Austria was annexed on March 13, 1938, the Austrian film industry and cinemas were already under the same strict censorship guidelines as in effect in Germany proper (*das Altreich*). In 1949 Hansen and Huth attempted to reconstruct the film, which premiered in Hamburg on February 9, 1950, under the title *Eine Frau fürs Leben* (A Wife for Life), but which has not been commercially released in video format. My analysis is based on the reconstructed version *Eine Frau fürs Leben*, available in videocassette at the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. All dialogues are taken from the original film script available at the Hochschule für Film und Fernsehen "Konrad Wolf" Potsdam-Babelsberg library. See Jochen Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren: Ein Film von Jochen Huth nach Motiven aus seiner Komödie des Alltags Ultimo!* (Film script, Berlin, [c. 1938] n. pag.).

¹³ "Nicht weinen Hannes. Jetzt wird alles gut." Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

¹⁴ "Die Menschen, die [Jochen Huth] auf die Bühne stellt, sind Menschen unseres Schlages, unserer Zeit und mit unseren Schicksalsfragen beschäftigt. Ihre Probleme und Lebensfragen liegen nicht in Niemandland, sondern werden täglich, stündlich von uns erlebt und erlitten." "Sprung von der Reichsautobahn nach Brasilien: Drei neue Filme — *Mann für Mann*, *Glück auf Raten*, *Kautschuk*," *Filmwelt* 41 (October 7, 1938).

¹⁵ "Es ist immer eine problematische Angelegenheit, dem Publikum einen Film zu zeigen, in dem es in seinen eigenen Alltag zurückgeführt wird. Und dann so deutlich und wirklichkeitsnah, wie wir es vorhaben. Schließlich wollen die Menschen abends im Kino abgelenkt werden und einige Illusionen vorfinden." "Ein Film über dich und mich: *Ultimo*," *Filmspiegel* 37 (September 9, 1938), 112–14.

¹⁶ "[D]er wahre Erfolg eines solchen Films, der das Leben nicht beschönigt oder romantisiert, um nicht zu sagen verkitscht, [kann] nur von seiner Wirklichkeitsnähe und seiner Wahrhaftigkeit abhängen." "Sprung von der Reichsautobahn nach Brasilien."

¹⁷ *Eine Frau wie du* (1939, Tourjansky), for example, features a factory social worker (Brigitte Horney) who with a few encouraging words can help workers and their families resolve conflicts. For a brief discussion of working women in German films after 1938, see Bogusław Drewniak, *Der deutsche Film 1938–1945: Ein Gesamtüberblick* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1987), 261–66.

¹⁸ See Jill Stephenson, *Women in Nazi Germany* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1975), 84–89, 99–100.

¹⁹ Qtd. in Annemarie Tröger, "The Creation of a Female Assembly-Line Proletariat," in *When Biology Became Destiny: Women in Weimar and Nazi Germany*, ed. Renate Bridenthal, Atina Grossmann, and Marion Kaplan (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1984), 241.

²⁰ Ian Kershaw notes that about half of the workers in the Bavarian textile industry were women and consumer goods industries in general employed a high percentage of female labor. In a large clothing factory in Upper Bavaria, seamstresses enjoyed a good wage, earning on the average 20–26 RM a week. See Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933–1945* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1983), 15–16, 92. See also Norbert Westennieder, "*Deutsche Frauen und Mädchen!*" *Vom Alltagsleben 1933–1945* (Dusseldorf: Droste, 1990), 66, 70.

²¹ Westennieder, "*Deutsche Frauen und Mädchen!*" 71. Whereas by 1936 married women were encouraged to seek employment, in 1938 all single women under the age of twenty-five were required to fulfill a year of service in the agricultural sector or as domestic help. This year of duty (*Pflichtjahr*), instituted for men as early as 1935 and women after 1938, was administrated by the *Reichsarbeitsdienst*.

²² Hannes: "Wenn ich dreissig Abschlüsse im Monat mache, kann das hundertfünfzig Mark bringen." Nora: "Du wirst mehr machen." Hannes: "Oder weniger. Es liegt nicht nur an mir. Eine Wohnung kostet fünfzig Mark. Essen für uns beide sechzig Mark, bleiben vierzig Mark." Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

²³ Westennieder, "*Deutsche Frauen und Mädchen!*" 66.

²⁴ Avraham Barkai, *Nazi Economics: Ideology, Theory, and Policy*, trans. Ruth Hadass-Vashitz (New Haven: Yale UP, 1990), 256.

²⁵ "Wenn wir verheiratet sind, dann muß es so schön sein. So schön, wie man es nur verlangen kann vom Leben. Es muß das Glück sein!" Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

²⁶ "Das erste Mal, wo uns keiner stören kann! Wo wir richtig allein sind — im eigenen Heim. . . . Das muss uns allein gehören! Wann, Hannes, wann!" The stage directions read, "Wieder bekommt ihr Gesicht diesen wilden Ausdruck des Hungers." Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

²⁷ “‘Und an die Zukunft müssen wir denken. Und da müssen wir eben Prämien bezahlen, wie für jede Versicherung. Und wenn man kein Geld dafür hat wie wir.’ Nora greift heftig nach den Rudern: ‘Dann zahlt man mit Glück.’” Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

²⁸ In 1938–39 the housing shortage in Augsburg was estimated at 20% with similar shortages in Munich and Nuremberg. Kershaw, *Popular Opinion*, 99.

²⁹ Westenrieder, “*Deutsche Frauen und Mädchen!*” 63.

³⁰ “Bilder, die geringe Lebenshaltungskosten und hohe Lebensqualität suggerierten: Gesundheit, Selbstversorgung und Familienidylle und beschauliches ‘Glück im Winkel.’” Peter Reichel, *Der schöne Schein des Dritten Reiches: Faszination und Gewalt des Faschismus* (Munich: Hanser, 1991), 309. For a discussion of the discrepancy between Nazi propaganda and the actual housing construction, see also Barbara Miller Lane, *Architecture and Politics in Germany, 1918–1934* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1968), 205–12.

³¹ For a detailed examination on National Socialist policy on settlements as well as extensive photographs and floorplans, see Ute Peltz-Dreckmann, *Nationalsozialistischer Siedlungsbau: Versuch einer Analyse der die Siedlungspolitik bestimmenden Faktoren am Beispiel des Nationalsozialismus* (Munich: Minerva, 1978).

³² “Diese Siedlungshäuser sind keine Hütten, sie sind Eigenheime, wie sie früher nur von gutgestellten Bürgern errichtet werden konnten. Die Arbeiter, die in diese Häuser ziehen und in diesen Siedlungen leben werden, sind keine Proleten mehr. Sie rücken auf die Reihe der Bauern, Handwerker und Bürger. Nicht ein Fremdkörper ist der Arbeiter mehr, der verachtet an seiner Stempelstelle steht, sondern ein Volksgenosse in der Gemeinschaft der Schaffenden,” qtd. in Sonja Günther, *Das deutsche Heim: Luxusinterieurs und Arbeitermöbel von der Gründerzeit bis zum Dritten Reich*, Werkbund-Archiv 12 (Giessen: Anabas, 1984), 115.

³³ Reichel, *Der schöne Schein*, 308–12.

³⁴ Detlev J. K. Peukert, *Inside Nazi Germany: Conformity, Opposition, and Racism in Everyday Life*, trans. Richard Deveson (New Haven: Yale UP, 1987), 190.

³⁵ “Der für das Dritte Reich charakteristische Rückzug in die Familie oder das eigene Haus war von Anfang an mit einem großen Interesse an neuartigen ‘amerikanischen’ Haushaltsgeräten und Zerstreungsgütern verbunden.” Hans Dieter Schäfer, *Das gespaltene Bewußtsein: Deutsche Kultur und Lebenswirklichkeit*, 3d ed. (Munich: Hanser, 1983), 122.

³⁶ Richard Grunberger, *The Twelve-Year Reich: A Social History of Nazi Germany, 1933–1945* (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1971), qtd. in Schäfer, *Das gespaltene Bewußtsein*, 114.

³⁷ Michael Burleigh and Wolfgang Ippermann, *The Racial State 1933–1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), 288; and David Schoenbaum, *Die braune Revolution: Eine Sozialgeschichte des Dritten Reiches*, trans. Tamara Schoenbaum-Holtermann (Berlin: Ullstein, 1999), 126.

³⁸ “Während die Diktatur die Arbeiterschaft vor allem durch Sicherheit und Aufstiegschancen überzeugte, band sie mittlere und gehobene Schichten außerdem mit einer breiten Konsumgüter-Produktion an sich.” Schäfer, *Das gespaltene Bewußtsein*, 117.

³⁹ Reichel, *Der schöne Schein*, 316.

⁴⁰ "Wenn ein Mann nur wüsste, was das für eine Frau bedeutet." Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

⁴¹ "Nora: 'Und alles in allem nur siebenhundertfünfzig.' Chef [des Möbelgeschäfts]: 'Und doch noch auf Ehestandsdarlehen, na? Macht Heiraten da nicht Spass?'" Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*. The censor cards quote a higher price of 1350 RM but note that the furniture can be purchased with a marriage loan, compare *Das Leben kann so schön sein*, Censor-Card 50115.

⁴² "Möbelbesichtigung und Möbelkauf — das sind Dinge, die im Leben aller Heiratslustigen eine große Rolle spielen! Der Film schildert in einer ganzen Reihe von Szenen die Pläne von Hannes und Nora, die immer wieder gerade um diese Dinge kreisen. Unter Berücksichtigung dieser Tatsache dürfte man mit einer großen Möbelfirma bestimmt eine wirkungsvolle Gegenseitigkeits-Werbung vereinbaren und durchführen können." "Praktische Werbe-Vorschläge," *Das Leben kann so schön sein*, advertising materials (Berlin: August Scherl Verlag, n.d.), 6, *Das Leben kann so schön sein*, Document File 9596, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv Berlin.

⁴³ "Als dieses Stück vor Jahren auf der Bühne erschien, war es in seiner Grundtendenz sehr eng mit dem Arbeitslosenproblem verknüpft. . . . Heute ist diese Frage durch die glückliche Wandlung der Umstände völlig außer Kraft getreten." "Sprung von der Reichsautobahn nach Brasilien." When *Das Leben kann so schön sein* was shown in the German Democratic Republic in 1962, the press noted the similarity between Huth's characters and stock figures from the Weimar Republic. Hannes Kolbe was described as a white-collar worker in the crisis period of the late Weimar Republic, who resembled the main character in Hans Fallada's *Kleiner Mann — was nun?*, a novel about an unemployed expectant father published in 1932. See *Das Leben kann so schön sein: Progress-Dienst für Presse und Werbung* (Berlin: VEB Progress Film-Vertrieb, July, 1962), *Das Leben kann so schön sein*, Document File 9596, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

⁴⁴ "Zank, Streit, Feindschaft! Anarchie! Das Chaos!" Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

⁴⁵ "Herr Dewitt, Reisender, wechselnder Branche, hat seine Bude auf Junggesellenart umgemodelt, es fehlen natürlich nicht der unvermeidliche türkische Rauchtisch und die zahlreichen Photos stark ausgezogener junger Damen garantiert einwandfreier Moral." "Der Architekt kann lachen: Stilleben aus Plüsch und Troddeln," *Das Leben kann so schön sein: Ufa Bild- und Textinformation* (Berlin: Ufa-Pressestelle, n.d.) n.p., *Das Leben kann so schön sein*, Document File 9596, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. The figure of Dewitt has been reduced significantly from the original screenplay, most likely a result of extensive editing after Hitler's ban. Compare Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren* and the videocassette copy *Eine Frau fürs Leben* at the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin. Since Dewitt is described as "the most tolerable [boarder], an optimist and always cheerful" ["Der Reisende Dewitt ist noch am erträglichsten, er ist Optimist und immer vernügt"], his scenes with Hannes were probably cut because Hannes confides his fears too openly to the traveling salesman. See *Das Leben kann so schön sein, Illustrierter Film-Kurier* 2905 (Berlin: August Scherl Verlag, n.d.).

⁴⁶ "Sie sind Zwilling. Unschüssig, schwankend, himmel hoch jauchzend, zu Tode betrübt. Schwächlich veranlagt, eher feige als mutig, mehr Kopf als Herz, sehr vorsichtig und im Ganzen kein Sonnenkind des Glücks." Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

⁴⁷ "Damit man weiss, wo man hingehört. Es war ja nicht einfach die erste Zeit, wir hatten es uns so anders gedacht — Aber es geht alles. Man gewöhnt sich an alles. Das Leben ist nun mal nicht so leicht, und die Liebe sehen Sie, die Liebe hilft über so viel hinweg. Dann kann man eine Menge ertragen." Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

⁴⁸ "Kommt alles. Sie sind ja noch so jung. Das Schöne haben Sie alles noch vor sich. Und Raum — ist in der kleinsten Hütte für ein glücklich liebend Paar." Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

⁴⁹ "Das Leben könnte so schön sein. [...] Trau dir schon mehr zu. Hab doch ein bißchen Mut. Es ist nicht gefährlich, man muss nur etwas wagen, tapfer sein, Hannes. [...] Glauben muss du an dich." Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*. Note that Nora's statement is in the subjunctive form, while the film's title is in the indicative form.

⁵⁰ "Ein Mensch, der vor lauter Sorgen jeglichen Mut verloren, zum Schluß keinen Glauben mehr an seine eigene Arbeitskraft hat und der an seinem mangelnden Lebensmut fast zugrunde geht." "Spielleiter sucht Schauspieler," *Das Leben kann so schön sein: Ufa Bild- und Textinformation* (Berlin: Ufa-Pressestelle, n.d.), *Das Leben kann so schön sein*, Document File 9596, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

⁵¹ "Das Leben heutzutage ist so gefährlich. Lesen Sie keine Zeitungen? Stellen Sie sich doch bloss mal vor, was Ihnen alles passieren kann. Und was können Sie dagegen machen? Garnichts. Unfall und Einbruch, Feuer und Krankheit. An jeder Ecke wartet das Pech bloss drauf, dass sie kommen. Auf einer Bananenschale können Sie ausrutschen." Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

⁵² "Ach wat. Wenn ick so dächte wie Sie, dann käme ick aus dem Zahlen jarnicht mehr raus. Und wat hätte ick davon? Nischt, wie Angst. Mich machsense nicht mehr bange. Ich kenne det Leben. Sind Sie denn nu versichert?" Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

⁵³ Ellen: "Mit euch Männern zusammenleben, ich danke. Die ganzen Illusionen gehen einem zu Teufel." Hannes: "Wir Männer bestehen überhaupt nur aus euren Illusionen! Wenn Sie die brauchen, gehen Sie doch ins Kino." Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

⁵⁴ "Manchmal habe ich es so satt!" and later, "Ach, manchmal möchte ich schreien." Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

⁵⁵ "Aber du lässt es mich alleine auskämpfen, nicht wahr? Du stehst nie vor mir, Hannes. Du lässt mich immer alles allein tun." Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

⁵⁶ "Warum lässt du mich denn so furchtbar allein—mit allem?" Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

⁵⁷ "Bei jeder Geburt werden zwei Menschen geboren! Das Kind und der Vater!" Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*.

⁵⁸ "KdF scheint zu beweisen, daß die Lösung der sozialen Fragen umgangen werden kann, wenn man dem Arbeiter statt mehr Lohn mehr 'Ehre,' statt mehr Freizeit mehr 'Freude,' statt bessere Arbeits- und Lebensbedingungen mehr kleinbürgerliches Selbstgefühl verschafft," qtd. in Ralf Wolz, "Mobilmachung," in *Heimatfront: Kriegsalltag in Deutschland 1939–1945*, ed. Jürgen Engert (Berlin: Nicolai, 1999), 25.

⁵⁹ *Der verzauberte Tag* premiered in Zurich in 1947 and was shown in a limited run in West Germany in 1951. It was also featured at the Berlin Film Festival retrospectives "Forbidden German Films, 1933–1945" (1978) and "The Director Peter Pemas" (1981), both organized by the Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, and at the film series "Filmic Nonconformity in the Nazi State" (1997), organized by the Freunde der Deutschen Kinemathek in Berlin.

⁶⁰ "In diesem Film werden keine Schönlinge, sondern wirkliche Menschen gezeigt. *Der verzauberte Tag* soll nicht zerstreuen, sondern sammeln und anregen." W. B., "Eine Rechnung, die nicht aufgeht: Dreck oder Gold, sagt Peter Pemas zu seinem ersten Film." Newspaper article, 1943, Peter Pemas, Personal File, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

⁶¹ "[Es] soll hier ein Film gestaltet werden, der in gewisser Hinsicht einen neuen Aufriß in der Szenerie und in der Fototechnik bringen wird. Vermieden werden soll — und das möchte ich vorweg betonen — gleisnerisches Gaukel- und Liebespiel. Ich will gegen jegliche Verflachung energisch ansteuern; die Handlung selbst, die durch starkes und gesundes Empfinden ausgezeichnet ist, kommt mir bei meinen Bemühungen auch entgegen. Es gilt, die Handlung eines jungen Menschen aufzuzeigen, der einer spießbürgerlichen Atmosphäre entrückt werden muß." W. B., "Eine Rechnung, die nicht aufgeht."

⁶² "Es ist Frühlingszeit. Über Nacht ging ein warmer Regen nieder und brachte die letzten Blüten auf. Die Bäume regen sich, und übermutig sind die Brunnen, die Vögel singen, und Sehnsucht ist überall. Durch diese Scheiben ist Stille. Hier liegt ein junger Mensch, Christine, vom Frühling wundersam verwandelt und nun zerstört. Sie fiebert. Die Hände suchen einen Brief, der in der Nacht des Unglücks, so sagt man, aus ihrer Manteltasche fiel. Die Schwester hat ihn schon längst gefunden. Der Fremde nimmt ihn und erschrickt. Fast zögernd sieht er seine Anschrift. Er öffnet ihn. In eine andere Welt versinkend liest er von einem Frühlingstag, wo ein Verhängnis schicksalhaft und unhörbar heraufzieht wie der Schatten einer Wolke." All dialogues quoted here are taken from the 35-mm film print of *Der verzauberte Tag* available at Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

⁶³ "Anni, geht's dir manchmal auch so? Du denkst, mit dem Zug, der jetzt einläuft, kommt etwas, worauf du die ganze Zeit gewartet hast. Du weißt nicht, was es ist, kannst es doch nicht beschreiben. Du weißt nur . . . jedenfalls soviel wie, es muß etwas anders geben als . . ." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁶⁴ "Wenn man etwas vom Herzen wünscht, geht es in Erfüllung." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁶⁵ "Für mich war es einfach die Erkenntnis, daß ein Mensch doch zu mir gehört. Mein Leben wird einen neuen Weg nehmen." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁶⁶ "Eine junge Frau kannst du dir ziehen, nicht. Man muß ihr nur helfen, sie in ihre Hausfrauenpflichten einzuleben. Übrigens, gut gesagt, huh?" *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁶⁷ "Ich sehe alles einfach verschleiert." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁶⁸ Women are described as "Spekulanten auf ein möglichst bequemes Leben" and a successful man as "ein begehrtes Objekt." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁶⁹ "Für den Künstler ist die Frau das interessanteste Objekt. Sie ist wie die Natur, unergündlich, unberechenbar und voller Geheimnisse." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁷⁰ Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1989), 19.

⁷¹ Mary Ann Doane, "Film and the Masquerade: Theorizing the Female Spectator," in *Issues in Feminist Film Criticism*, ed. Patricia Erens (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1990), 50 and 51.

⁷² "Sind Sie mal gemalt worden?" *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁷³ "Von perfekten Rosen kann man nicht leben." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁷⁴ "[Das Mädchen führt] seinem Wunschtraum aus allen möglichen Vorkommnissen des Alltags ichbezogen solange Nahrung zu, bis es nicht mehr zwischen Traum und Wirklichkeit unterscheidet und in ein Erlebnis hineingezogen wird, das beinahe einen tragischen Ausgang genommen hätte." Hermann Hacker, "Der gefährliche Wunschtraum: Zu dem Terra-Film *Der verzauberte Tag*." *Der verzauberte Tag Presse-Heft* (Berlin: Inland-Pressdienst bei der deutschen Filmvertriebs-GmbH, n.d.), 11, *Der verzauberte Tag*, Document file 18397, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

⁷⁵ Anni tells everyone she has a "Märchenprinzen," "weil ich es mir so sehr wünsche." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁷⁶ Anni says: "Heiraten? Versorgt sein? Schön wäre es." Wasner encourages her, "dann sind vielleicht schon Kinder da, und du bist älter geworden und ruhiger." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁷⁷ "Von meiner Mutter habe ich jetzt gelernt, was es heißt, von früh bis spät auf den Beinen zu sein und dann die Besorgnis um das nötige Geld." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁷⁸ "Warum bin ich kein Mann? Als Mann hat man doch die Möglichkeit, die größten Ideen zu verwirklichen." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁷⁹ "Vielleicht hat sie andere Wünsche." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁸⁰ "Es war wie ein Wunder. Ich bin nicht leichtsinnig. Ich habe an das Walten des Schicksals geglaubt wie an etwas Heiliges." The final lines of her letter are revealed later: "Du wirst mich verstehen. Das Schicksal hat mich zum Narren gehalten, daß ich mich schäme. Wir dürfen uns nie wiedersehen." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁸¹ "Wenn du dich nachts hier auf der Straße herumtreibst, dann wirst du wohl auch wissen, was man von dir will." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁸² "Ich hole mir das, was mir zusteht." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁸³ Christine: "Die Augen." Götz: "Nicht sprechen. Ich war blind, aber jetzt sehen sie dich so wie du bist, so wie ich dich liebe." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue.

⁸⁴ "*Der verzauberte Tag* bekundet, nach der Kriegswende in Stalingrad und Afrika, den Wunsch nach Wärme, Geborgenheit der ausgebombten Kinogänger und bietet ihnen einen traumhaften Ausblick in die Zukunftslosigkeit, den Verlust der Gegenwart und das Überrollen durch Vergangenheit." Karsten Witte, *Frankfurter Rundschau* (March 26, 1978).

⁸⁵ "Menschen unserer Tage, mit unseren Freuden und Sorgen stehen vor uns. Und doch zeigt dieser Film Dinge, die wir im Alltag nicht sehen. Hier fällt gleichsam die Maske von den Gesichtern. Feinste seelische Regungen werden sichtbar und zwingen

zum Miterleben dieses in seiner Alltäglichkeit so ergreifenden Schicksals." Günther Dietrich, "Hinter der Wirklichkeit: Ein Film aus dem Alltag — kein alltäglicher Film," *Der verzauberte Tag Presse-Heft*, 7.

⁸⁶ "Es ist schön und nützlich, daß sich dieser Film mit einem Problem auseinandersetzt, dessen Vorkommen nicht damit abgestritten werden kann, daß es in der Welt des Alltags nicht sichtbar in Erscheinung trete. Und ebenso schön ist es, daß der junge Regisseur Peter Pewas, der mit dem "Verzauberten Tag" seine erste große Arbeit vorlegen wird, dies Problem des gefährlichen Wunschtraumes bis zur letzten Konsequenz entwickelt und die Lösung auf natürliche Weise durch die Macht des wirklichen Lebens herbeiführt." Hacker, "Der gefährliche Wunschtraum," 11.

⁸⁷ "Die Beurteilung des Films durch die Luftschutzgemeinschaft war überwiegend negativ. Vor allem die männlichen Besucher lehnten den Film scharf ab, weil ihnen der Verlobte der Christine (Ernst Wladow) zu trottelt haft gezeichnet war und auch Hans Stüwe als Prof. Götz nicht überzeugte. Eine Anzahl von weiblichen Besuchern hat diesen Film kritikal hingegenommen, während andere wiederum mit Recht die Frage stellten, was eigentlich mit diesem Film zum Ausdruck gebracht werden soll. Über den Handlungsablauf seien sie auch nicht klar. Nur wenige Mitarbeiter des Hauses, die in Führungsaufgaben verschiedener Abteilungen stehen, erkannten die gefährliche Tendenz, die in diesem Film steckt. Sie ergibt sich aus dem Halbweltmilieu, der unerfreulichen Zeichnung des biedereren Beamten, der koketten Führung der Anni (Eva-Maria Meinecke) und überhaupt der sehr eindeutig geführten Regie." Letter from Reich Film Intendant Hinkel to Goebbels, dated July 7, 1944, qtd. in Wetzel, *Zensur*, 138. See also Ulrich Kurowski and Andreas Meyer, eds., *Der Filmregisseur Peter Pewas: Materialien und Dokumente* (Berlin: Volker Spiess, 1981), 43, 74.

⁸⁸ "Es war nur die Machart, denn der Stoff war absolut genehmigt, war befürwortet worden von oben. Ich hatte immer das Gefühl, die Leute wollten seinerzeit, wo die ganzen Fronten ins Wanken geraten waren, keinen Einbruch an der Kulturfront. Sie wollten keine Formversuche, keine akustischen Versuche, sie wollten Handfestigkeit, da fiel auch das Wort Kulturbolschewismus." Interview with Peter Pewas on January 6, 1978, qtd. in Wetzel, *Zensur*, 40.

⁸⁹ "Auf Weisung des Herrn Reichsministers vorläufig zurückgestellt, weil der Stoff zu düster ist," qtd. in Wetzel, *Zensur*, 143.

⁹⁰ "Die Filmabteilung sei bereits unterrichtet worden, daß der Film *Via Mala*, der an sich gut beurteilt wurde, wegen seines düstern Charakters zur Zeit zurückgestellt werden muß. Der Film ist nur für das Ausland freigegeben worden," qtd. in Wetzel, *Zensur*, 144.

⁹¹ Erich Kästner wrote in his diary on April 8, 1945: "Auch Harald Braun war nicht müßig. Gestern abend startete er im hiesigen Kino die Welturaufführung des Films *Via Mala*, et tout le village était présent. Denn die Außenaufnahmen wurden im Vorjahr in und bei Mayrhofen gedreht, und so mancher Einwohner hatte, gegen ein kleines Entgelt, als Komparse mitgewirkt. Nun war man gekommen, um das Dorf, die Gegend und sich selber auf der Leinwand wiederzusehen." Erich Kästner, *Notabene 45: Ein Tagebuch*, qtd. in Fritz Göttler, "Westdeutscher Nachkriegsfilm: Land der Väter," in *Geschichte des deutschen Films*, ed. Wolfgang Jacobsen, Anton Kaes, and Hans Helmut Prinzler (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1993), 171. Baky's film premiered under the new title *Via Mala: Die Straße des Bösen* in East Berlin on January 16, 1948.

⁹² "Das ist kein Vater, das ist ein Vieh." All dialogues taken from the videocassette copy of *Via Mala* available at the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

⁹³ "Glaubst du, ich bin gern hier? Glaubst du, ich gehe nicht lieber heute als morgen weg? Dieser Gott verflüchter Müller! — Dann geh doch. Wo soll ich denn hin? Wo soll ich denn hin? Auf die Straße, wo du hingehörst. Ich bin so einmal weggelaufen. Er hat mich wieder geholt. Er findet mich überall. Er läßt mich nicht los. Der Teufel. Der Teufel." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

⁹⁴ "Gott soll mich vergessen, wenn ich es ihm vergesse." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

⁹⁵ "Deshalb mehr als der Bürgermeister oder der Amtmann. Euch kann man nicht wählen oder absetzen. Ihr seid da. Und es ist ein Glück für das ganze Dorf, daß Ihr da seid. Für jeden, der etwas auf dem Herzen hat." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

⁹⁶ "Er ist kein Mensch mehr. Er bringt uns noch um. Sie wissen nicht, was sie da unten in der Mühle für ein Leben führen." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

⁹⁷ "Ich habe so Angst. . . . Aber er ist immer da, sobald es dunkelt. Er sitzt in der Ecke am Küchenherd. Er hockt auf dem Holzstapel. Er geht hinter mir zur Mühle. Er lauert an meinem Bett. Ich habe immer Angst." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

⁹⁸ "Vielleicht bin ich schlecht. Vielleicht bin ich für meinen Vater . . . Wer weiß es?" *Via Mala* film dialogue.

⁹⁹ "Andi: 'Nein, Silvi. Ich weiß, was Du willst. Du denkst an deinen Vater.' Silvelie: 'Ja, bei Tag und bei Nacht.' Andi: 'Ich weiß es. Ich habe mit Herrn Bündner gesprochen. Vor dir, von deinem Vater, von deiner Familie, von der ganzen unglückseligen Vergangenheit. Das liegt hinter dir Silvi. Auch wenn dein Vater verunglückt ist oder irgendwo . . . Du hast mit ihm nichts zu tun. Er liegt unten. Vergiß es, vergiß das alles. Denk nur an mich.' Silvelie: 'Ich kann nicht vergessen, ich darf nicht.'" *Via Mala* film dialogue.

¹⁰⁰ "Ich will, daß die Vergangenheit endlich vergangen ist. Macht einen Strich darunter und versucht von vorne an." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

¹⁰¹ "Er hat alles geordnet and gutgemacht." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

¹⁰² "Mein Vater ist tod, für mich, für alle." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

¹⁰³ "Lass die Vergangenheit, oder es gibt ein Unglück für dich und für mich!" *Via Mala* film dialogue.

¹⁰⁴ "Recht muß Recht bleiben . . . um jeden Preis." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

¹⁰⁵ "Wir können nicht leben in einer unsauberen Welt." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

¹⁰⁶ "Das Recht wird siegen und die Menschen werden zugrunde gehen." *Via Mala* film dialogue. Bündner echoes this sentiment later when he speaks to Andi, highlighting that this view of justice takes precedence over Andi's unbending notion that "law must remain law."

¹⁰⁷ "Im Geist hat ihn jeder von uns umgebracht. Im Geist ist jeder von uns schuldig. Wenn irgendeiner ihn umgebracht hat, so hat er unsere Tat getan und dann ist er nicht schuldiger als wir." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

¹⁰⁸ "Ich dachte, sie aus der Hölle zu erlösen. Gewiß wollte ich sie erlösen, aber ich wollte Silvelie um mich haben. Das war das Unrecht. . . . Unrecht zerfrißt den Menschen wie die Säge den Baumstamm." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

¹⁰⁹ "Wenn er schuldig ist, dann sind wir das alle." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

¹¹⁰ "Gott verzeih ihm und uns." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

¹¹¹ "Dann kann ich mich ruhigem Herzen jeden Richter stehen." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

¹¹² The following book titles illustrate the branch of history that explains Hitler's rise to power and genocidal plans in terms of monsters, sickness, or madness. See Franz L. Neumann, *Behemoth: The Structure and Practice of National Socialism, 1933–1944* (New York: Octagon Books, 1963); Robert G. L. Waite, *The Psychopathic God: Adolf Hitler* (New York: Basic Books, 1977); Edleff H. Schwaab, *Hitler's Mind: A Plunge into Madness* (New York: Praeger, 1992); George Victor, *Hitler: The Pathology of Evil* (Washington, DC: Brassey's, 1998); Fredrick C. Redlich, *Hitler: Diagnosis of a Destructive Prophet* (New York: Oxford UP, 1998). For an excellent outline of the historical debates surrounding Hitler, see Ian Kershaw, *The Nazi Dictatorship: Problems and Perspectives of Interpretation*, 3d ed. (New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1993).

¹¹³ Bündner's suicide is described in *Via Mala, Das Program von heute* (Berlin: Das Program von heute, Zeitschrift für Film und Theater GmbH, n.d.) and *Via Mala, Illustrierter Film-Kurier* (Berlin: Vereinigte Verlagsgesellschaft Franke & Co., n.d.). While these film programs contain no dates, they were clearly printed in Nazi Germany because these publications were discontinued after World War II. The altered ending is featured in the video copy available at the Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin and described in *Via Mala: Die Straße des Bösen, Illustrierte Film-Bühne 665* (Munich: Film-Bühne GmbH, n.d.). See *Via Mala*, Document File 18403, Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

¹¹⁴ See *Zu neuen Ufer* (1937) and *Der Weg ins Freie* (1941).

¹¹⁵ Werner Sudendorf wrote in 1990: "In seiner Absicht, die Frage der Kollektivschuld und der unbewältigten Vergangenheit unter den Tisch zu kehren, ist der Film ein dauernder Widerruf von vorher eingenommenen prinzipiellen Positionen . . . So verheddert sich der Film im Geflecht von Behauptungen und Prinzipien," qtd. in *Das Jahr 1945 und das Kino*, ed. Norbert Grob and Helma Schleif (Berlin: Stiftung deutsche Kinemathek, 1995), 159.

¹¹⁶ "Er zeichnet ein Bild der rohesten Gewalt, ein Bild des Terrors — und der Wunden und Schmerzen, die dieser Terror in den Menschen drumherum anrichtet. . . . ein Film des ästhetischen Widerstands: auch ein Aufruf zum Tyrannenmord." Norbert Grob, "Die Vergangenheit, sie ruht aber nicht," in *Das Jahr 1945 und das Kino* (Berlin: Stiftung Deutsche Kinemathek, 1995), 32, 33.

¹¹⁷ Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich, *The Inability to Mourn: Principles of Collective Behavior*, trans. Beverley R. Placzek (New York: Grove Press, 1984), 26, 18, 15.

¹¹⁸ "Alles, was schlecht ist, kommt vom ihm." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

¹¹⁹ "Es wird eine Generation kommen, die sich weigert zum Richter zu werden, sonst müsste sie sich selber verurteilen." Göttler, "Westdeutscher Nachkriegsfilm," 173.

¹²⁰ "Was wollen Sie im Film sehen: Probleme oder problemlose Unterhaltung, Schicksale aus dem wirklichen Alltag oder aus einer unwahrscheinlichen, alle Wünsche erfüllenden Welt; Müßiggänger in einem reichen Milieu oder arbeitende Menschen in einer Welt der Arbeit?" Hans Spielhofer, "Wunschtraum oder Wirklichkeit:

Eine Betrachtung über Notwendigkeit und Problematik ihrer Abgrenzung," *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 11 (May 1939): 317.

¹²¹ "Das Schicksal, das da oben auf der Leinwand an uns vorüberzieht, soll und muß so stark sein, daß es uns einfach zwingt, uns mit den Handelnden eins zu fühlen — ihr Erleben zu dem unseren zu machen." Hete Nebel, "Künstler antworten uns: Professor Carl Froelich: Zeitnahe muß nicht gleichbedeutend mit Gegenwart sein!" *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 11 (May 1939): 311.

¹²² "Die Wirklichkeit als Wunschtraum! — der Film soll das wirkliche Leben zeigen, aber in einer aufgelockerten Form." Heinz Rühmann, "Kurz und bündig," *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 11 (May 1939): 314.

¹²³ These viewer remarks were considered so significant that they were quoted twice in the same issue of *Der deutsche Film*: "Der Film soll kein Abklatsch der Wirklichkeit sein, sondern den Alltag idealisieren, den Sinn der täglichen Arbeit aufzeigen, unsere Nachbarn und uns selbst zeigen in Augenblicken, in denen wir Allgemeingültigkeit haben und Typen werden. Stärker akzentuieren also, als es die Wirklichkeit tut! Unsere Welt ganz klein zeigen und ganz groß, Heroismus und Brutalität! Aber immer unsere Welt: wie sie ist, wie sie sein könnte." Spielhofer, "Wunschtraum oder Wirklichkeit," 319; and also Frank Maraun, "Das Ergebnis: Wirklichkeit bevorzugt! Eine Untersuchung über den 'Publikumsgeschmack,'" *Der deutsche Film* 3, no. 11 (May 1939): 308.

¹²⁴ "[Ein Zuschauer] wünscht sich als Helden mal einen braven Arbeiter, der durch tägliche schwere Arbeit sein bescheidenes Brot verdient, immer zufrieden ist und mit 75 Jahren mit 60 RM Invalidenrente davon weiterlebt, trotzdem dankbar ist, Gott oder dem Schicksal, dabei durchaus nicht einfältig zu sein braucht, sondern ein Lebensphilosoph, der über Reichtum und Wohlleben erhaben ist und sich über das freut, was übrigbleibt: Wald, Feld, Militär, Kunst, vielleicht auch sein Lachen." Spielhofer, "Wunschtraum oder Wirklichkeit," 318.

¹²⁵ My term "national socialist realism" purposefully plays off the notion of "socialist realism," because they are remarkably similar prescriptive formulas.

¹²⁶ Nora: "Manchmal habe ich es so satt!" Huth, *Ein Mensch wird geboren*. Anni: "Wir leben sowieso nicht lange," and Christine: "Es muß etwas anders geben." *Der verzauberte Tag* film dialogue. Silvelie: "Lieber Gott, wie sollen wir das aushalten? Ich kann es nicht mehr ertragen." *Via Mala* film dialogue.

¹²⁷ "Aus Amerika übernommen, wo er einst durch die Filmproduktion vom Schlagwort für die billige Konzession an dem "Publikumsgeschmack" zum Geschäftsprinzip avancierte, wurde er beim deutschen Publikum zu einem Wertmesser, der eine bestimmte Bedeutung enthielt: "glückliches Ende" um jeden Preis, mochte es auch die innere Logik der Filmereignisse ad absurdum führen: Optimismus des "keep smiling," mochte die Thematik noch so ernst und tragisch sein. Der deutsche Mensch hat für einen solchen, alle Dinge rosarot verklärende Optimismus noch niemals eine Vorliebe gehegt, und er hegt sie heute weniger denn je. Nicht weil er im Grundzug ein Pessimist wäre, sondern weil er selbst — Optimist ist. Optimist aber aus heil gebliebenem Herzen, aus ungebrochener Lebenskraft. Er blickt den Dingen ins Auge, nicht um ihnen konziliante Komplimente zu machen, sondern um sich ernsthaft mit ihnen auseinanderzusetzen. *Er erkennt die ethischen Kampfbedingungen des Lebens an.*" Hans Joachim

Neitzke, "Rückzug vor der Entscheidung: Happy end — ja oder nein?" *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 65 (March 17, 1939), emphasis in original.

For further contemporaneous articles on the problem film and the happy end, see L. E. D. "Gibt der Film ein falsches Weltbild?" *Licht-Bild-Bühne* Beilage zur Nr. 25/26 (January 29, 1938); Walter Panofsky, "Was will das Publikum auf der Leinwand sehen?" *Film-Kurier* 224 (September 24, 1938); "Problem-Filme? Ja!" *Licht-Bild-Bühne* 24 (January 29, 1940); Theodor Riegler, "Traumbild und Wirklichkeit," *Filmwelt* 6 (February 9, 1940); Walter Panofsky, "Die Sache mit dem happy end: Historische Beispiele zu einem oft diskutierten Thema," *Film-Kurier* 108 (May 11, 1942); and "Ein Grundproblem der Filmgestaltung: Über den harmonischen Ausklang eines Films," *Film-Kurier* 9 (January 12, 1943).

¹²⁸ The drunkard pilot Gaston Thibaut in *Kongo Express* (1939) redeems himself in death, while the artistic weakling Claus Werner drowns as punishment for his treason in *Kolberg* (1945).

¹²⁹ "Wahr sind nur die Erinnerungen, die wir mit uns tragen, die Träume, die wir spinnen und die Sehnsüchte, die uns treiben. Damit wollen wir uns bescheiden." *Die Feuerzangenbowle* (1944, Helmut Weiß), film dialogue.

Epilogue

GENRE FILMS APPEALED to mass audiences in the Third Reich and also to the propaganda ministry because they operated successfully on many different levels. These popular motion pictures featuring favorite stars as predictable characters in formulaic narratives were comforting in their familiarity and corresponded in large part to consumerist fantasies of an apolitical realm beyond the here and now. Genre films endorsed the pleasure of repetition and recognition, catering to the desire for stability and epistemological certainty through such mundane experiences as recalling familiar stories, characters, conflicts, and resolutions.

With its divided consciousness, constantly assuring the German people that things remained the same and just as vehemently arguing that a revolution had taken place, National Socialism could not effectively negotiate a logical synthesis of these opposing ideas and did not try to do so. Instead it allowed the competing notions to coexist in a tense fashion, mediated by such institutions as the cinema. With its dreamlike quality and ability to conjure up alternative realities, the cinema could theoretically bridge the gaps in ideology in a non-rational, visceral manner. In a world of changing circumstances and evolving social practices, when the Nazi regime was trying to reshape German society and embark upon imperial conquest, the familiarity of genre cinema was especially reassuring because it could be taken as evidence that the more things change the more they remain the same.

Propaganda Minister Goebbels was equally smitten by genre cinema because it was eminently profitable, reinforced the government's claim that a nonpartisan social arena continued to exist, and could promote a value system compatible with ordinary beliefs while still being conducive to the regime's political agenda. Focusing on heroes who possess traditionally positive personality traits such as loyalty, self-sacrifice, and obedience together with devotion to a higher ideal, hierarchical allegiance, and camaraderie, entertainment films delivered attractive role models. Equally attractive were aberrant characters who flaunt their difference and exist on the margins but typically motivate social cohesion and are justifiably reintegrated into the community or eliminated from it entirely. Such typed characters placed within a recognizable set of events were marketed in the hope that similar stories with similar outcomes could convey steadfast ideas and elicit predictable responses.

Perhaps even more useful than teaching evaluative norms, motion pictures could inspire viewers to adopt general attitudes to harmonize with the goals of

National Socialism. Foremost among these was the stance that personal happiness, when in accord with the needs of the community, could substitute for political empowerment or the relative well-being of those defined as others. Whether imagined as the quiet satisfaction of being alone in a rowboat in *Das Leben kann so schön sein*, the dream of living together in a castle of the heart in *Damals*, or finding temporary shelter in a surrogate family in *Verklungene Melodie*, popular narratives of the Third Reich consistently depict the desire to retreat into a protective shell and self-defined territory. The profound wish to escape the watchful eyes of strangers and the constraints of everyday life is only attainable in fleeting moments, for the spiritual home is like the cinema, a phantasmagoria that is ever-shifting and only recoverable through memory. However, if one recalls the lyrics from one of the most successful wartime musical revues, the feeling can be recaptured. As the song from the ice capade extravaganza *Der weiße Traum* (1943) instructs: “Buy yourself a colorful balloon, take it firmly in your hand, imagine it flying with you to a distant fairytale land — buy yourself a colorful balloon and with some fantasy you will fly to the land of illusion and be happy like never before.”¹ Flights of fantasy could transport the willing viewer at any time back to the land of illusion and happiness as reconstituted in the mind’s eye. The advice given in this blockbuster film illustrates poignantly that the moviegoer was not considered a passive somnambulist mesmerized and paralyzed by some inescapable trance. Instead it encouraged the audience to become active daydreamers, willingly choosing psychological fantasies to color their world, evoking the sounds and images experienced in the cinema to imagine a painful reality in a more pleasant manner.

Happiness defined as ecstasy expresses the belief in a higher purpose and is routinely linked to musical performances and collective identity. The zealous actor cum revolutionary whipping up the audience emotionally to ignite political passions in *Tanz auf dem Vulkan*, the young musician playing the church organ to lead his fellow soldiers to safety and commending himself to the raging fires of martyrdom in *Wunschkonzert*, and the celebrated singer motivating wounded soldiers to swing to the beat and recommit themselves to battle in *Die große Liebe*, each endorse a form of feverish happiness that rises above individual wishes to forge unity and communal desire.

Finally, *Schadenfreude* or finding joy in other people’s pain is an effective strategy to demarcate the lines between us and them and conversely to take delight in erasing those boundaries, if only momentarily. The pleasure in seeing enemies endure ridicule and loss in *Robert und Bertram*, the exquisite beauty of watching a passionate woman dying in *Opfergang*, and the enjoyment of such forbidden pleasures as miscegenation and deviant sexuality in *Kautschuk* or *Frauen für Golden Hill*, encourage viewers to accept and even welcome suffering that is framed as just and ultimately seductive. The marginalization of Jews, asocials, and biological inferiors and their inevitable punishment in popular narratives make suffering, exclusion, and elimination seem like the

natural course of events and socially acceptable. Likewise, the pain of redeemable and admirable characters is made meaningful in alluring ways. Routinely, genre films support the view that heroic death in battle for a higher purpose is inherently attractive and commands euphoric adherents because it exalts the common loss of life to the level of the sacred. Consuming other people's pain may be a human preoccupation as old as storytelling itself, but in Nazi Germany it supported institutional violence of untoward dimensions.

Helmut Käutner, generally considered the closest thing Nazi cinema had to an oppositional director, populated his melancholy films with vaguely dissatisfied characters in narratives that constantly go against the grain. In his melodrama *Romanze in Moll* (1943), Käutner gives voice to a skepticism that casts doubt on the very essence of genre cinema in the Third Reich and its claim on happiness. His tragic lovelorn heroine Madeleine poses the trenchant question, "Do we really have a right to happiness?"² If happiness is defined as the individual's right to choose affiliations, the freedom to form elective affinities, then a cursory look at Madeleine's life delivers a resounding no. Forced to endure the caged environment of her loveless petty bourgeois marriage, the brutal sexual advances of her husband's employer, and a potentially liberating affair that must nonetheless be rendered in a minor key, her suicidal response in the film's opening scene renders the question moot. In Nazi Germany happiness was not a right but a political tool.

Genre films played a significant role in advancing a mindset that encouraged viewers to filter reality in an agreeable fashion, focusing less attention on the outcome of events than on their emotional content. The historical musical, for example, transforms political and economic discord into social harmony, liberating feelings of frustration and injustice and channeling them into resolutions that restore the status quo. The blockage of social happiness, be it the lack of a genuine leader or the surreptitious influence of the Jew, is surmounted through stirring song and dance routines that advocate emotional succor rather than social change. In a similar manner, home-front films reconstitute war as a battle for culture rather than resources, shifting remote international conflict and violence to the intimate sphere of family and communal entertainment. This genre encourages feverish commitment to a higher ideal as the price for social cohesion and personal fulfillment, frames death and loss in meaningful ways, and tries to assure audiences that universal values continue to exist. Both the historical musical and the home-front film use music to elicit a binding belief and affective connection to events and ideas that transcend rational explanation.

Conversely, various genres center on disturbing pleasures and largely intolerable forms of happiness that threaten to destroy the tenuous social fabric and must be constrained. The adventure film, for instance, casts a rare glimpse at difference, focusing attention on alluring foreign bodies and distant realms. However, the voyeuristic pleasure afforded by the adventure genre is routinely located within moralistic narratives that permit or even

wallow in deviance ephemerally, only to discipline and repudiate such delights in the end. As if to disavow foreign temptation, the hero in adventure films typically disenfranchises others, laying claim to their riches and incorporating their distinctiveness into his own. Alien people and places function largely as a compass in both senses of the word, as a device to navigate one's way and as a roundabout journey to the original starting point. Exploration abroad re-establishes the centrality of home and similitude. Likewise, the melodrama depicts the eruption of unacceptable desire within the established order in a highly ambivalent manner, by drawing considerable attention to dissatisfaction and demonstrating the need for alternative lifestyles only to deny their validity later on in categorical terms. Although it dwells on transgression against patriarchal authority, when all is said and done, the melodrama works to reconfirm the stability of the nuclear family and home.

With its prescribed mission to highlight social issues beyond the individual's control and plead for systemic changes, it is ironic that the Propaganda Ministry ever endorsed the problem film and understandable that examples of the genre rarely garnered enough official support to reach the big screen. Like the fewer than two dozen science fiction films that appeared in movie theaters during the Third Reich, the problem film remained a small and challenging genre. Similar to the science fiction genre, which convinces viewers to imagine the world in radical terms, casting off the known and embracing completely different paradigms of the truth, the problem film was potentially too drastic in its call for an alternate reality and thus too subversive. Both the hyper-fantasy of science fiction and the hyper-reality of the problem film would allow the carefully crafted self-image of the National Socialist world to collapse. The limitations of individual genres are emblematic of the limitation of cinema in general. As long as viewers see the reality outside the movie theater as incompatible with the communal fantasies projected onto the screen, then watching motion pictures cannot hope to be a transformative experience.

Nazi cinema shares much with its Hollywood counterpart: a reliance on genre films with mass appeal, highly structured narratives, audience identification and strong emotional attachment, a star system, studio advertising campaigns and a trade press, and most of all, a sensitivity to market forces in order to create and sell products the public wanted to buy. What makes the motion picture industry in the Third Reich unique is that its practitioners were profoundly aware that cinema's ideological potential was not a veneer but at its core, not a hidden agenda but its very essence. It is the coordinated attempt by the Nazi government to control and steer audience reactions, to achieve specific, transparent goals that separates this institution most clearly from the equally profit-driven, consumerist, popular cinema in the United States at the time. The Nazis wanted much more from the cinema than just profit, they hoped for a nearly religious ritual experience that could influence and satisfy the masses in an unprecedented, almost mystical transformation.

Joseph Goebbels did not merely want the cinema to animate entertaining stories to entice the public with appealing fantasies; he also saw cinema as a heuristic tool to cast the world itself as a meaningful story. Under Goebbel's tutelage, the film industry hoped to demonstrate that going to the cinema reveals the moral truth beneath the surface of things and recharges life with the significance, legitimacy, and urgency needed to believe that reality is a coherent and ordered system. It was their keen aspiration to prove that the act of watching motion pictures could inform the viewer's response to reality. However, despite broad oversight of the film industry, the Propaganda Ministry could not guarantee that viewers would receive films according to any preordained schemata. National Socialism's project of enchanting reality through motion pictures and mass culture resonated with the public at various levels, but the cinema could not sustain the broad-based following or absolute universal devotion necessary for a new pseudo-religion. As Max Weber warned in visionary fashion, "If one tries intellectually to construe new religions without a new and genuine prophecy, then . . . [one] will create only fanatical sects but never a genuine community."³ National Socialism's attempts to re-enchant the world were not foolproof political strategies. Although the cinema in the Third Reich provided outlets for emotional needs, it could not transmit a uniformly acceptable political philosophy and forge a spiritual cohesion necessary to construct and maintain a genuine national community.

Coming to grips with the past, especially a past as destructive as that of Nazi Germany, has important lessons for the present. Goebbels argued often that the best propaganda is invisible and hides its intentions from the audience. At the heart of my book has been an effort to make the machine visible, to illustrate how the art of seduction practiced in movie theaters throughout the German Reich helped maintain the fascist state. It is my hope that this study contributes to an important area of scholarly work by making readers more aware of the powerful ideas behind cultural products often taken for granted as mere entertainment.

Notes

¹ "Kauf' dir einen bunten Luftballon, nimm' ihn fest in deine Hand, stell' dir vor er fliegt mit dir davon in ein fernes Märchenland — kauf' dir einen bunten Luftballon, und mit etwas Phantasie fliegst du in das Land der Illusion und bist glücklich wie noch nie." *Der weiße Traum* (1943, Geza von Cziffra).

² "Haben wir wirklich einen Anspruch auf Glück?" *Romanze in Moll* (1940, Helmut Käutner).

³ Max Weber, "Science as a Vocation," *From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology*, ed. and trans. H. H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills (London: Routledge & K. Paul, 1948), 155.

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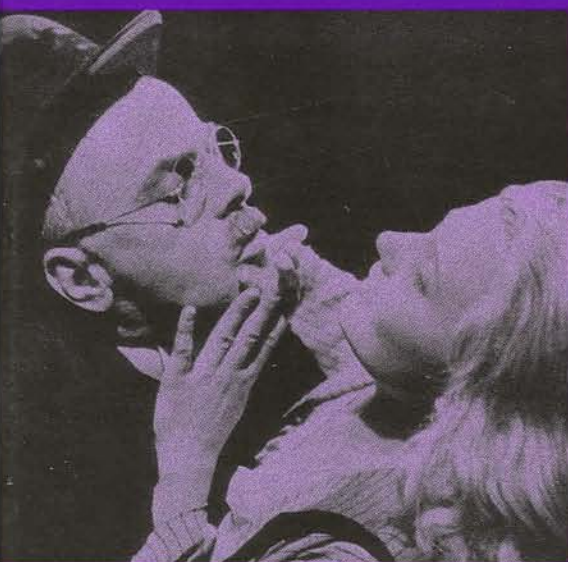
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Scene from *Der verzauberte Tag* (1943/44): Krummholz attacks Christine. Courtesy of Bundesarchiv-Filmarchiv, Berlin.

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